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CAUCASUS DIARY

Sir John Hunt

A very great deal of exploration has been done in the Caucasus since 1868, when Douglas Freshfield, a famous past President both of the Royal Geographical Society and of the Alpine Club, with Tucker and Moore and their guides, first climbed Elbruz at one end, and Kasbeck at the other end of the high central massif of this great rampart of mountains between the Black and Caspian Seas.

Most of this exploration was done in the last quarter of the last century, when all the bigger peaks were climbed, including the second highest, Shkara, by Holden, Woolley and Cockin, and the third highest, Dych Tau, by the great Mummery, twenty years after Freshfield's first visit. Ushba, the Matterhorn of the range, was climbed, also by Cockin and his guides, in that same year, 1888; a remarkable achievement.

Then, except for a visit by Longstaff early in the century, there was a long gap. It was nearly thirty years before the Austrians, the Germans and the Swiss 'Tigers' of the 1930's, during eight years of ambitious campaigning, introduced their own new methods and high standards of alpine technical skill, with great success, to the harder problems in the range. In particular, they stormed the southern wall of Ushba and the 7,000 feet of north-facing precipice which falls into the Bezingi Glacier. The last chapter in this great phase of mountaineering was written by a party of enterprising young men from Oxford University in 1937; they made a new route, never again repeated, up the South face of Ushba, and a number of other climbs.

Then there was a gap of twenty years before climbers from the West again received permission to visit the Caucasus. It was in this period that Soviet mountaineering, in its infancy before the war, made rapid strides; particularly after the last war. To Mrs. Dunsheath fell the distinction of being the first 'capitalist' climber to revisit these parts, just over a year ago, when she made a very late-season ascent of Elbruz. To us, a private party,* unsponsored by and not representing anyone but ourselves, came the good fortune to be the first group of climbers to be allowed to return there since 1937, bent on carrying out a programme of serious ascents.

* The party consisted of: Sir John Hunt, Alan Blackshaw, George Band, Derek Bull, David Thomas, Christopher Brasher, John Neill, Michael Harris, Ralph Jones.

Why did we go ? First, to climb. There is quite a satisfaction to be found in treading, if not virgin soil, at any rate summits first trodden by one's own compatriots; we were keen to follow in the footsteps of Donkin, Woolley, Cockin, Collier and, especially, Mummery. Second, and more important, we wanted to meet and make friends with the Russian climbers.

1*st July*, 1958. We spent the morning repacking, in order to send our loads, in two parts, to Naltchik with a Soviet climbing party.

In the evening there was a reception by Soviet mountaineers and journalists at the Journalists' Club. This was a most enjoyable and memorable occasion. Around a table loaded with Georgian wines and brandy, we exchanged speeches and toasts in the most warm and friendly atmosphere—no façade at all. Romanov was our chief host; Anuvrikov was there, whom I had met at Trento; Abalakov, a very famous climber; Baldin, whom we had entertained in North Wales; and a number of others. They showed us two films, including an excellent one of Ushba, and then there was a curious procès-verbal, already drawn-up, of the conditions under which we might climb. Romanov and I signed it in English and Russian. Great stress was laid on safety and the importance of (*a*) avoiding undue risks and accidents, (*b*) notifying destinations and intended return times, and (*c*) adhering to these.

Altogether it was a very remarkable, indeed a historic evening.

3*rd July*. We were aroused at 3.40 a.m. and boarded the plane at 4 a.m. for Mineralne Vody, where we landed at 5.30 a.m. A few striking hills rise from the flat plain here for about 1,000 feet, one of them, Snake Mountain, being especially shapely. We had breakfast under the friendly supervision of an airport official who spoke excellent English, all learnt by correspondence course; his name is Uri Borshenko. A bus had arrived to take us to the Spartak Base,* and we left about 7.30. We were soon over the border into the Republic of Balkaria, passing through rolling country on the road to Naltchik. Peasants with typical white broad-brimmed hats were on the road, some of them in small donkey carts,

* A permanent camp administered by the Union of Co-operative Workers.

others on horseback. The country was treeless and mainly vast grassy plains. The Balkari have recently returned from their fourteen years of exile at Stalin's command. Village scenes were reminiscent of Greece or even India, with mud brick huts thatched and whitewashed.

At Baksan we left the Naltchik road and started along the river which rises in the Elbruz area; the road, roughly cobbled, was exceedingly uneven and we were hurtled all over the place. Gradually the valley narrowed between crumbling limestone cliffs and we began to make height. The east side was heavily wooded, the west bare and grassy. Small marmots, no bigger than rats, were sitting on boulders and there were some interesting birds; we saw a large dark eagle, probably a spotted eagle, flying low by the river. At Tirnaus, a growing town with some mining development, we stopped to buy stamps, soup, etc., and fell in with a friendly lorry-load of Soviet climbers on their way back from the Bezingi; Beletski was among them, in charge of their camp. Many photographs were taken and an hour soon sped by.

Then we were on the last stretch, climbing steeply up the flanks of the narrow gorge; we reached the camp at 2.30 p.m. in the rain. Many willing hands took charge of our luggage and we were soon sitting down to a very large meal. We met the deputy camp chief and some of the instructors—Vladyimir Zirianov, U.S.S.R. ski champion; Uri Tur, who climbed Pobeda Peak in 1956; Josef Kachiani, Misha Khergiani and Shaliko Margiani, three outstanding mountaineers. After this it was very necessary to take some exercise, so we walked up the Shkhelda* torrent as far as the snout of the glacier. The weather had cleared and we had some fine views of Kavkaz Peak (4,048 metres) and the four peaks of Shkhelda. Zirianov and Tur pointed out some of the big face climbs on Shkhelda and we discussed our intended ascent of Kavkaz.

A hot shower on return to camp, dinner and more social contacts afterwards, then the camp order came for 'lights out' on the loudspeaker.

4th July. We were woken at 7 a.m. by the loudspeaker, calling everyone out to ablutions, followed by the music of Schubert. Ten minutes later, as we rose to wash, there was a further call to exercise, and young Russians came out of

* Pronounce Shi-elda.

their huts in P.T. attire, girls and boys. Soon after, some were trotting off to the woods, others were swinging on parallel bars; others again playing basket ball, and one attractive lass was very slowly going up some steps, practising speed skating in slow motion. Altogether a stimulating sight, which put us decadent Westerners to shame! After breakfast there was further photography and fraternizing; we managed conversations with several Russians—some in English. Four Czechs came up and the girl in the party gave me her scarf. We packed up and had lunch at 2 p.m. Outside the dining-room a party of boys and girls were sun-bathing and preparing skis at the same time!

We were joined by Josef and Misha and set off at 3.50 p.m. for a bivvy site beneath Kavkaz Peak. A long plod up steep grass and scree brought us to this attractive spot at the top of a moraine slope, at 10,000 feet. It took three hours from the camp. We passed a large Czech party on the way down from a training climb. The flowers were wonderful: primulas, white and wine-coloured; white azaleas, daisies of various colours, vetches, harebells, gentians—a veritable garden.

5th July. We woke at 3 a.m. and struggled with Primus stoves; it was 4.30 before the last party left (parties: Misha, Alan, Derek; Josef, Ralph, Dave; Mike, John Neill, Chris; Eugene, George, self). It was a clear morning. As we climbed up the snow towards a prominent gendarme, Elbruz and Donguz-Orun came into view. We roped at the foot of a steep ice slope to the left of this gendarme. On the ridge at the top, there was a glorious view of Ushba, framed between steep cliffs. There followed an easy rock rib and another col, after which a steep snow *demi-lune* led to a buttress of steep, easy rocks which were, however, dangerously loose. At 8 a.m. we reached a first summit where Dave and John decided to go no farther; the main summit, a fine-looking pyramid, rose ahead of us, rather depressingly distant and steep for my state of acclimatization. We descended 200 feet of easy rocks to yet another col, then ascended snow and steep rocks, very loose indeed, reaching the top at 10.15 a.m. Just below the summit, rocks were dislodged which struck Mike and Ralph, damaging the former quite badly.

Stupendous views—the Bezingi peaks, Jailik, nearby Bzeluch, Ushba and Shchurovsky Peak, Elbruz and Donguz-Orun, Shkhelda. We went on to a further summit, a few feet higher, and two hours soon sped by. To minimize the danger of loose rock, each party negotiated the rock sections separately, which caused very long delays. Even so, Chris was struck on the head and bled profusely. At 5 p.m. we were all back at the bivvy site; by 7.20 back in camp. Fruit, drink and flowers were offered by our charming hosts. Altogether a wonderful day.

6th July. We have decided to move out for the next eight to nine days, establish a base on the Ushba plateau, undertake another training climb, and then the traverse of Ushba. We shall have with us two Russians, Anatoli Sisoyev (Master of Sport) and Anatoli Kustovski.

After dinner a reception had been arranged, to which some two hundred people, climbers, instructors and students from four or five other camps had been invited. It took the form of an exhibition of our equipment, an introduction of ourselves by me, an address of welcome from the camp commandant and a long 'question time,' first the Russians, then ourselves, finishing with a vote of thanks by Beletski. It lasted two hours and will be quite unforgettable. The atmosphere was exceedingly cordial, great interest was shown and there was a good deal of laughter. They enjoyed a few mild leg pulls from our side, but were too polite to pull ours!

Beletski brought his wife and daughter, Irina, aged ten, to meet me. Irina is an adorable child, with wide sparkling eyes, her hair in plaits, tied by bows on top of her head. She asked permission to present me with a small badge from her blouse.

And so to bed, full of friendly feeling all round.

7th July. We spent the morning packing rucksacks with personal gear, climbing equipment and food to last the next eight to nine days on and above the Ushba Plateau. The resulting bulk and weight of my sack was appalling, and it was with grave misgiving that I started off soon after 12 noon, carrying well over 60 lb. on my back. The journey up the moraine of the Shkhelda Glacier required a good deal of resolution, and is best forgotten. We literally staggered along, over and among the boulders. I found it difficult to move in stages of half an hour at a time, and no less difficult to limit the halts to five minutes. At one point I left my camera, and

it was only about a mile farther on that I discovered the loss. Leaving my load, I went back and found it, miraculously in such a stony wilderness, but almost an hour was lost. Eventually we got on to the open glacier after passing the Akh-su Glacier tributary and the going was better. I was now travelling with Eugene who, carrying no less than me, was certainly making less of his load (*anno Domini*). Here we saw the phenomenon of the 'red snow' referred to by Freshfield; a reddish tinge made by some bacteria in the snow bed. At long last the first of our party (E. and I had now caught up the leaders) arrived at the foot of the stony spur at the head of the glacier, opposite the Ushba icefall, up which we must climb tomorrow. A party of nine Russians were already there and several of them came down to greet us; one, Shaliko Margiani, with the generosity typical of everyone here, took my load up the last slope to the bivvy site (German Bivouac); it was 7.30 p.m. (five hours twenty minutes from camp). Other Russians offered us hot, sweet tea. The weather had been windy, wet and miserable all the way up, and we got our tents quickly fixed up on three platforms, Eugene, Alan and I sharing a Black's 'Mountain Tent.' A fine stew, followed by tea, soon restored our spirits and we settled down happily for the night, rather squashed, as our two Russian friends failed to turn up and this left us a large tent short.

8th July. We woke at 6 a.m. and got away about 8.30; it was already cloudy, and an early view of Elbruz was soon blotted out. Two of the Russians had started at 3 a.m. for the very severe North wall of Shchurovsky Peak, and we could hear their voices on the forbidding-looking face opposite us. Mike and Derek went ahead, followed by Ralph, Eugene and myself. We overtook the leading pair quite soon, for I was feeling on excellent form despite the immense load. The icefall is steep and complicated; we were under threat for some time from some big séracs just below the top, some of them looking horribly wobbly, but luckily nothing came down. By midday the weather had closed in completely and visibility became very poor. Moreover, we were beginning to tire. As the ground levelled out beneath a huge ice wall, it was so thick that we decided it was best to camp on the spot. So we made a platform and set up the tent in a heavy snowfall, at 1.15 p.m. The others turned up about half to three-quarters of an hour later, and here we are, with the snow

settling on our blue tents, at some 4,000 metres, beneath Ushba. We are wondering what may have befallen the two Russians in the North face of Shchurovsky. At about 7 p.m. we heard faint shouts above, through the cloud and snow; it soon transpired that this was Shaliko and his companion groping their way down the SE. ridge of Shchurovsky Peak. We guided them in by shouting, and at 7.45 p.m. they arrived, having climbed the North face in record time.

9th July. It snowed all night and, after a brief spell of sunshine early this morning, it has been a simply terrible day —visibility nil, with wind and driving snow. Ralph, Eugene and I set off into the mist at 8.30 a.m. and went up to this higher plateau. Following the tracks of Shaliko and his companion last evening, we struck up for the ridge of Shchurovsky Peak. Sensing rather than seeing the immense cornice on our right, we reached the summit (4,200 metres) at 9.20 a.m. There was a view almost vertically down to the German bivvy site on the Shkhelda Glacier and we yelled in the hope of being seen, or at least heard. We left our names in Russian in a bottle under the summit cairn and started down. As we reached the foot of the ridge the others met us, on their way up. In thick mist and snow, our party went across the upper plateau to attempt Little Ushba, but it was so thick that we could not see our way on to the NE. ridge and gave up the attempt. It was just as well, for the weather got even worse and has so remained for the rest of the day. Chris, Alan and George started digging a snow cave, and by 5 p.m. it was a sizeable structure, big enough for three in comfort. This has relieved our state of overcrowding, as they have left the 'Sundowner,' and Derek has joined Dave in that unsatisfactory tent. During the afternoon three parties of Russians turned up in the blizzard, including a girl—five of them had been at the German bivouac two nights ago. The last to arrive were 'our' two Russians—Anatoli Sisoyev and Anatoli Kustovski. We offered the new arrivals hot drinks and soon settled down as quite a big encampment. Ralph, Eugene and I have built a large wall of snow blocks to protect our tent and baggage, and the cave diggers are snug in their dug-out. We have just eaten dried, salted fish and tomatoes, brought up by the Anatolis—a most strange dish at 4,000 metres! They have challenged us to a game of chess. At about 7 p.m., the clouds lifted, to reveal North Ushba, Elbruz, Shkhelda and

other peaks beneath an angry sky. Black, mushroom-shaped clouds hung above the summits, and the valleys were filled with boiling grey mists; behind all was a lurid sunset. We discussed the situation, and confirmed the general plan of a three-group assault on Ushba.

(*a*) A four-man, south-north traverse party, to cross Ushba Pass and bivvy high above Gul Glacier one day ahead of the remainder.

(*b*) A north-south traverse party to start one day later than (*a*).

(*c*) A support party to accompany (*b*) and await (*a*) with snow caves prepared on the saddle at the foot of the North Peak.

We also confirmed that at least one day must elapse before we can put this plan into operation, in order to ensure settled weather and settled snow. Tonight the outlook is dubious indeed.

We discussed the political situation with Eugene; I read some poetry (an unaccustomed exercise) and so to sleep at 9.15 p.m.

10*th July*. It has been an unremittingly terrible day. Snow started again last night and by morning at least eight inches of fresh snow had fallen. It has continued to pile up, hour after hour, and we have been fighting a losing battle to keep the tents clear; tonight, with two and a half feet of new snow, they are half buried. There has been nothing for it but to lie in our sleeping-bags, hoping for a clearing which never comes. At 4 p.m. we all squeezed into the snow cave—eleven of us packed tightly together—to review our position. The choice lies between continuing to besiege Ushba, which will now be out of condition—even in fine weather—for at least three days; and descending as soon as possible, cutting out Ushba and going to the Bezingi Glacier. Reluctantly we have decided on the latter course. Tonight, so much snow has fallen and is still falling, that we appear to be cut off until some of it has avalanched. Luckily we are well stocked with food, but the situation can hardly be called satisfactory.

11*th July*. It snowed again the whole night through. This morning it snowed on and we prepared to depart. But so dense was the mist that the first two parties to leave returned, being unable to see a thing. We hung around till

11.30 a.m. when the two Russian parties decided to have a go. We followed and soon caught them up as they groped their way down in knee-deep fresh snow. Gradually, by trial and error, we went on down in snow and mist, reaching the glacier in about two and a half hours. Here, too, new snow lay deep, for it was still snowing to about 1,500 feet above the camp. At this stage it was raining, and it was a wet and bedraggled party that returned to Spartak at 6 p.m. On the way down we met a search party coming to look for two of the Russians we had met at the German bivouac four days ago, and who were attempting a IVB route on Shchurovsky Peak. Happily some of us had seen them on the glacier. It is nice to be back to a shower and a good dinner; everything here is muddy and dripping from continuous rain; we realize that it was as well we came down. Shevilov told me he had an eighty-man strong search party ready to leave tomorrow to look for us!

12*th July*. Tonight it has cleared and there is starlight for the first time since 5th July.

13*th July*. Leave taking this morning, in glorious sunshine, was a most moving affair. After loading the lorry, a large crowd assembled and Shevilov made a speech and presented me with a large photo of Ushba, headed with the camp emblem and signed by the staff. I replied, and presented him with a watch; Josef and Misha with a pair of boots and a small sleeping-bag respectively; the two Anatolis with an air-mattress each. This was followed by much photography, and we departed at 10 a.m. with Misha, Josef, Shaliko and Anatoli Kustovski (who is coming with us to Bezingi) on board; also little Rassida, a small girl, and her father. We rattled and bumped our way down the Baksan river to the main Piatigorsk—Naltchik road and entered the latter at 2.15 p.m. After a lunch at the Naltchik Hotel—where we were viewed with much curiosity by the Russian guests—we sent off cables and letters, and set off for Bezingi at 4.30 p.m.

The journey up the valley of the Cherek is unforgettable. After some miles across the grassy steppes, sown with corn, potatoes and sunflowers, we entered a limestone gorge, which became wilder as we went farther south, until the red cliffs seemed almost to topple over on top of us. The track, bestrewn with immense boulders after the recent rain, and under torrents of water in places, was distinctly hazardous;

but for extremely skilful driving we might not have come safely through. Gradually, this gorge opened out; after passing a ruined fortress and two deserted villages, with houses very like the Sikkim ones at Lachen or the Nepalese at Namche Bazar, we reached New Bezingi at about 8 p.m. Much building—with mud bricks but proper tiles or tin roofing—is in progress, for these Balkaris have just returned from fourteen years' exile in Kazakstan (Central Asia). We stopped to inquire about mules or horses to take our loads up the last stage of our journey to the Misses Kosh. We were surrounded by a tough-looking bunch of youngish men, not particularly friendly, wearing quilted coats and Russian-style cloth caps. They told us we could get mules (in fact, quite small donkeys) at the old farm at the road end, 6 km. on. So on we went, the 'road' becoming two muddy rutted wheel tracks in long grass, till at about 8.30 lights showed up ahead; we had arrived. Here we are, camped in a mown meadow. Supper has been cooked, someone has seen the latest Sputnik racing across the clear, starlit sky—what a strange reminder of a totally different world.

14*th July*. I was woken this morning at 5.30 by noises from a neighbouring tent. An elderly, bearded Balkari with a Tibetan-type, fur-lined hat was conversing with Eugene. He had come to protest at our camping on his mown grass, but, on learning who we were, was gracious and friendly. His father remembered English climbers here in the last century, and took part in the search for Donkin and Fox. He himself remembered the German Expeditions in the thirties. He had returned from exile last year, and was very happy about it. Twenty per cent. Balkaris had preferred to stay in Kazakstan; some of the young ones, in particular, had run away from Bezingi after returning here. Later, we visited his *Kosh*, the last habitation in the valley, and drank some sour milk. A very simple structure of boulders and turf with log roof, it is some 300 years old. The walk up, with ten donkeys and one horse carrying our baggage, was a delight; lush alpine meadows, rich with flowers, filled the valley—there was a riot of colour, wild roses, vetches, mallow, gentians, orchids, large pink daisies, saxifrages, purple and red and mauve clovers—these were only a few of the alpine and sub-alpine flowers. Fritilleries and Apollos flitted among them, and a few birds.

At the glacier snout we paid off the ponymen, and crossed the torrent by a rope and pulley—it was efficient and quick. A steep pull up over a high, grass-covered moraine ridge led to the large camp of the Academy Group led by Boris Garf (whom we met in Moscow); Alex Baldin is one of the party. They welcomed us, helped us lift our baggage from the river, and at 7.30 p.m. after our own meal, entertained us to tea and snacks at their camp, while plying us with information about the climb—it was a very pleasant occasion, and I questioned Boris Garf, stuffing myself the while with caviare and honey.

Finally, we held our powwow in the Olgi tent (used for stores). We decided to divide into three groups, according to standard, and tackle the following climbs in the first period of our stay:

(1) Shkara by the Müller route (grade VA): Band, Harris, Bull, Kustovski.

(2) Jangi Tau by the Schwarzgruber route (grade IVB): Hunt, Jones, Blackshaw, Brasher.

(3) Gestola by the face, descending over Lialver: Neill, Thomas, Gippenreuter.

15th - 19th July. Ascent of the Schwarzgruber* route on Jangi Tau. How to describe these last eventful and exciting days ? I can record only the bare facts in this diary.

Our group left soon after midday on the 15th, on a very hot, summery afternoon. Ralph and I walked together up to the Misses Kosh, a lovely walk along the grassy, flower-covered moraine terraces with the glacier well below us; we lunched there, combined with much fraternizing with a charming group of Russians, who were engaged in fixing a bronze plaque on a wall in memory of two Russians killed last year on Dych Tau. Band's party also arrived, and we all went on, our group traversing the grassy hillside, the other descending to the glacier. At one point I saw a herd of wild goats (*tur*), large, sand-coloured beasts, which made off up the mountainside.

Eventually, we also descended on to the glacier and, after passing a Latvian group on its way back from Shkara, climbed up again on to the moraine, reaching a reasonable site for

* First climbed 21st to 23rd July, 1935, by D. Schwarzgruber, W. Marin, F. Poringer, and H. Thaler.

our bivouac in the moraine trough at 7 p.m. We were directly opposite our route on the far side of the glacier and could study it at leisure; it looked extremely impressive. We turned into our sleeping-bags inside our Zdarsky tent-sacks, and I lay on my back gazing peacefully at the star-loaded sky before dropping off to sleep.

16th July. It was a cold night and stirring ourselves at 2 a.m. was an effort. We got away at 3 a.m. and roped up on the glacier—Alan and Chris, Ralph and myself. Turning the great rock buttress at the foot of the ridge on the right side, we climbed a steep little icefall menaced by impending ice walls above, and then swung left up very steep snow, to attack the great slope falling from the lowest step on the ridge —about 800 feet up. The Germans had climbed this by the rocks on the left, but we preferred to take a line farther right up mixed snow, ice and rock—all pretty steep. The last 200 feet, on steep ice overlaid thinly by deteriorating snow, gave us some anxiety until we were up on the short level curve of snow arête, at 9 a.m.

Here Ralph and I took the lead. The ridge rises fairly steeply, and is rock from 800 feet or so; interesting climbing with a few good pitches, but rather loose, specially where basalt intrudes into the granite. The final pitch, well led by Ralph, was an awkward move up a rather holdless slab, to turn a tower.

Here there is another respite, and the ridge changes character. A great rock tower rises ahead and beside it a steepening couloir. I took over, hopefully climbing without crampons. Three hundred feet up, the angle was pretty steep (50 degrees). I came on to ice; above, a small snow neck and then a fearsome-looking upward traverse, under ice bulges, above a tremendous precipice. I banged in a first ice piton and got Ralph to come up and put on my crampons—not an easy job at such an angle. On we went, step cutting now in ice, the angle mounting steadily to upwards of 55 degrees. More pegs—slow, tense work. After 400 feet of this, I came out on the ridge proper, a great relief.

Ahead, another tower, partly snow arête and partly rock, awkward stuff and a hard finish. We found ourselves on the snowy crest of the 'tower of two gendarmes,' described by the Germans: a narrow crest of snow, and the higher one rose ahead, marking the top of the rock buttress. Alan's rope took

over and led up some very steep, narrow snow ridges and striking ice thereon (piton).

At last we were out on to the snow arête, at first wide, with a little plateau and a schrund—weak bridge—to cross; then up another very steep section, myself leading—ice again. Yet another plateau, another schrund, and the steep, straight blade of snow arête led upwards—it looked short.

How wrong we were! On and on and on it went, at a constant 45 to 50 degrees, seemingly never ending. Alan took over half way, for we were all tiring. More ice, another piton; it was growing dark.

It was 8 p.m., before, at last, we topped the arête, which joined the upper terraces with a graceful curve. Each of us was pretty done up and feeling the height—5,700 metres.

Quickly we scraped a platform and bedded down, while a snow shower flurried on us. But the stars were soon out again, as Chris struggled with the Meta stove to produce a half-cup of soup; Alan, to make a stew.

17*th July*. I think we all slept reasonably well. Ralph and I snuggled together in our Zdarsky sack for warmth. The sun struck us soon after 5 a.m., and after the usual struggle we were up and away, at 8 a.m. At once it was obvious we were in for trouble, for the snow was over knee deep, with a breakable crust. We took short turns to lead, about 40 to 50 yards each, making up diagonally to the left. Progress was very, very slow in this frightful stuff. During a halt I said we should return down our route—not traverse, and this was agreed. We left most of our kit and advanced on an immense schrund, below the summit ridge. There was just one possible point to cross, where the upper lip rose 20 to 25 feet above the lower; it was obviously a difficult job. Alan in the lead: with a peg and an étrier he got a purchase on the wall, and, with two axes as footholds (the surface was snow, unfortunately), made a fine lead up. Above, steep, deep snow; I led. We crossed the path of an avalanche, beneath an ice cliff; half the slope had been swept away. The half which remained was indescribable—waist deep, heavy and dangerous: a nasty place, all the time threatened by the ice cliff above.

A large crevasse had to be crossed. Chris crept over it, and heard a creak. I followed and—wumph—the whole surface collapsed and I was falling; 25 feet, and I landed on a ledge in a real monster abyss, the sun shining through the hole

above. I shouted for a rope and Alan quickly obliged. Thankfully I emerged, and we consulted. Clearly, the snow was dangerous and the going terribly slow. We were perhaps only 300 feet below the summit ridge, but we were unanimous that we must turn back. Jangi Tau was perhaps 600-700 feet above us.

Back to our bivvy platform. Descending the bergschrund wall last, an axe, providing a step, came out with my weight on it and I hurtled backwards, making a comfortable landing in deep snow after 20 feet!

At 4 p.m. we started down the snow arête, in bad weather; the surface was very bad, with our steps breaking through: so bad that it took us three and a half hours to descend, longer than going up (ice pegs). We bivouacked on the plateau at its foot.

18*th July*. Away at 6.45 a.m. with a doubtful-looking sky. It was very slow work down the snow ridge, as great care was needed. Our first abseil was off the top of the lower gendarme. Three hundred feet lower was 'my' ice pitch, which looked—and, with rotting snow on ice, was—a thoroughly dangerous place. In two abseils we reached good snow at a better angle—then had a fierce struggle to pull in the 250-foot rope; more time consumed. Down the rock rib, and at 3 p.m. we stood on the lowest step of the great ridge. Alan tried a direct abseil line suggested by me, from one rock island to another over snow in a highly 'avalanching' state. After a reconnaissance he pronounced against it, as the intervals seemed too long. So he and Ralph prospected farther to the right, towards the rock buttress, and found a promising rock rib. Down it we went, abseiling all the way (seven in all, 200 feet at a stretch) using our whole supply of rock pegs. Light was almost gone when we touched the glacier at 8 p.m. The situation had become, in fact, a serious one for some time past. Torches (two) out, but only one worked, and with its aid and with Alan's skilful route finding down the ice, we reached the lowest snow couloir and groped our way in full darkness across the glacier. It was 10.5 p.m. when we reached the moraine bivvy site and our spare sacks; we were pretty tired and very relieved. A charming note had been left by some Ukrainian climbers whom we had met at Spartak.

19*th July*. Up at 3 a.m. and away at 4 a.m., in a race to head off a rescue party at the end of our 'control time' (8 a.m., 19th July). Here Chris came into his own; accompanied by me for the first twenty minutes, he shot off like a Sputnik and got down to Base in good time.

More leisurely, I followed, revelling in the scented, lush alps beside the glacier as I went.

Later. A formal ceremony on return of a Russian climbing group is evidently a feature not only of a mountain school such as Spartak. We have watched several groups return, either to the Academy of Sciences Camp, or the *Trud* (Work) Camp today. They go out and return in close single file; on reaching camp all inmates turn out and the parties face each other, the climbers halting and standing to attention on a word of command. Their leader then reports the results of their climb, whereon the inmates shout in unison: 'Welcome to the Conquerors of . . . Peak! Welcome! Welcome! Welcome! ' The climbers then break off, to be received with much enthusiasm and fuss. It all seems a trifle extraordinary to us. By contrast our party returned today at intervals of about half an hour, to be received very casually by Neill and Co.!

This evening we have entertained Garf, his daughter Marina, and Pavaniev to 'high tea.' While this was on, two Balkari shepherds reported having killed a wild goat (*tur*). Eugene went to help them get it across the river, and later we went to their sheepfold to inspect it; a huge beast. The kindly man insisted on giving us a haunch; he had shot it with an old smooth bore dated 1850, at 250 metres! We learned that wolves prey on their sheep, and that bears are common in this valley. They offered us sour milk from a sheepskin gourd. The younger man has a father aged 107 living at Bezingi, who took part in the search for Donkin and Fox in 1888.

20*th July*. Visited the sheepfold this morning, and drank sour milk with Eugene, Ralph and Chris outside the shepherds' tent. They had made some sausages from the *tur* shot yesterday, and showed us a pair of male horns from a beast killed by wolves.

George's party returned at 9 a.m. with splendid news. They had climbed their route on Shkara and had overcome great difficulties; in general, their impressions of the climb

and the problems of these big Caucasus routes were the same as ours. We were all very glad to see them safely back and not a little pleased to have another success. We discussed our plans and decided to attempt Dych Tau by various routes.

In the afternoon we were invited to give an account of our climbs to the members of both the Russian camps. This was a rather embarrassing affair, but everyone seemed to be interested and certainly appreciated our jokes! We went on to a party arranged for us by the *Trud* (Work) Group, whom we had not met before. It was a really delightful evening, with us squeezed with a few of them into a small tent, lit by candles, while a vast tureen of ***borsch*** was brought in, followed by two more tureens full of meat and potatoes. Questions were fired at us, and by us, and it was all so charmingly informal and friendly; the pity was that we had had our lunch at 4.30 p.m.—a large one including part of the wild goat! Afterwards we sat outside, while the Russians sang to a guitar a succession of delightful songs, including one of Kipling, *Day and Night*, and two about English sailors. I asked for one of these, about an English sailor and a Russian girl, as an encore, which brought to a close a very remarkable evening.

We had a talk with Garf, Pavernin and Alex about the Dych Tau routes, and decided:

(*a*) George and Mike to attempt the unclimbed South Rib.

(*b*) Alan, Eugene, Chris and myself to do the Mummery route.

Unfortunately, Ralph, Derek and Anatoli are invalids with poisoned cuts; John has a bad heel and Dave feels he is too slow. We all hope to return Thursday night or Friday and then propose to visit Sukhumi on the Black Sea, some via Svanetia, others by plane from Mineralne Vody.

22nd - 24th July. Our great hopes for Dych Tau have been dashed. It was planned that we start at 7 a.m. on the 22nd, and Eugene and I set out shortly after that time, expecting Chris and Alan to follow soon. We made good speed up the glacier and reached the Dych Tau corner (where we had bivvied for Jangi Tau) at 10.45. Leaving a note for the others, we went on to the end of the moraine, as far as the junction with the glacier descending from Sella's Col. It started to rain, and we crept into our polythene bags for shelter. It was after 2 p.m. when Alan and Chris turned up! The latter had become involved in newspaper articles and had

kept Alan waiting for two and a half hours; it effectively 'put paid' to a high bivouac—an essential part of our plan for Dych Tau. It was a depressing start.

George and Mike arrived on their way to attempt the South Buttress of Dych Tau. We went on after a meal, and bivouacked about 1,500 feet higher, under a boulder. Thunder, snowfall and heavy clouds boded ill for next day. Alan and Chris shared the Zdarsky tent-sack. In the night it came on to snow heavily, soaking my sleeping-bag, but soon after 1 a.m., it was clear starlight; we stirred ourselves, got the Meta stove going, and were away at 2.30 a.m. A little higher, reaching a snow-filled cwm, we roped and put on crampons: Eugene and I; Alan and Chris. Steep, frozen screes and broken rocks brought us to the glacier terrace beneath the SW. face of our mountain. We continued up steep, interesting rocks on the left of a couloir, towards a most prominent feature, a great rampart of light-red rock. Here E. and I waited for an hour, then turned to look for the others. Chris was unwell with a bad stomach and could go no farther. So on a little ledge below the rampart, we made a bivouac site, left him with our kit and went on; it meant that we should have to return to this place and could not—though we did not realize it at the time—reach the top and return from there. It was 10.45 and two and a half hours had been lost.

Somewhat half-heartedly the three of us went on, traversing beneath the Red Tower, up a couloir beside it and on to a neck on the ridge connecting it to the main ridge behind—we were following closely the description in Garf's book *Bezingi*. Here the rocks on the steep ridge were snow plastered. It was 11.30 and already clear that there was no hope of getting to the top and back in the day. Very despondently, we turned back, down to the bivvy; it was snowing. We discussed the position. Should we stay up, in the hope of good weather next day, and of Chris being better? At the time, neither seemed likely; it was clear to me that, what with the late start and Chris's indisposition, the spirit had gone out of our enterprise and we decided to descend—so much for long-cherished dreams! A combination of failure, at the outset, to concentrate on the main job of climbing a mountain, of sickness and poor weather conditions, had dispelled them.

At the moraine we found two Russian groups—one with Boris Garf and his daughter—set to climb Dych Tau; one by

our route, the other by George's. They were more than kind, insisting that we ate their suppers and attending to us in a number of ways. Afterwards, one group tried to persuade me to join them in another 'go' at Dych Tau; it was tempting, but there was definitely not time if I was to stick to the planned departure of our group on Saturday.

Yesterday, in perfect weather, we returned down the glacier to Base. Chris, I am glad to say, is much better.

26th July. We are now anxiously awaiting George and Mike and getting ready to leave this wonderful valley. We got up early (breakfast 6.45 a.m.) and packed ready for departure; it was a glorious day. At 10 a.m. all was ready. The donkey man had arrived and Eugene and I went to have a last chat over a mug of *iran* (sour milk) with Askerbi and his mate. They were genuinely sorry we were leaving and we, no less so, to say farewell to them. Here, in this beautiful valley, is human nature undefiled. For five months, from May until the snows come, these shepherds leave their families in Bezingi (Askerbi's wife is pregnant, the older man has a schoolboy son) and live with their flock from the Collective Farm. Our arrival and stay was the central point in their existence and they made the most of it; a pint of fresh milk, delivered at 5.30 each day, was left outside our tents ready for breakfast; it had never been asked for. Most days one or other of us would go to the fold and gossip over mugs of *iran*. Askerbi, after shooting a *tur*, offered us our choice of the meat. All this, with nothing asked in return. We were their guests, not to be exploited or robbed, but to be cared for.

Back at the camp, the uneasy wait continued. At 11.30 Eugene and Anatoli came over to discuss the organization of a rescue party, according to the Russian rules. Indeed, I was just then forcing my mind to focus on this complete reversal of our plans. Briefly, we conferred. All except two (Dave and Ralph) would go up to the Russian Bivouac beneath the North Ridge of Dych Tau, leaving at 2 p.m. with food for three days. If we had not returned by 9 a.m. tomorrow, a Russian support party would leave, some to join us, others to go to the Moraine Bivouac on the south side, in order to contact Garf's party. Everyone got busy on their own jobs. We left punctually, after a lunch hurriedly prepared by Dave and Ralph. At the last moment Ulla, a charming girl from the Academy camp, joined us, as guide to the bivouac.

We went up to Misses Kosh in worsening weather—there was a sudden change at midday. Then on, towards the point where a toilsome climb up 3,000 feet of scree began, while in my mind, and doubtless that of the others, too, every eventuality was passing, including tragedy itself, with all the sad and difficult things which have to be done.

Suddenly John Neill behind me said: 'There are two figures ahead.' In front of us the leading group had halted in their tracks along the grassy moraine edge—Alan was looking through Ralph's binoculars. Then a cheer went up. There was a waving of axes and Chris started forward at a run. Through the thickening mist, two figures, one in green, the other in coffee-coloured windproofs, were descending the great mountainside—they were our missing friends.

The relief was tremendous: it could be felt at 200 yards. A few minutes later we had joined two weary travel-stained heroes, back from a climb of yet undertermined but very great difficulty—the traverse of Europe's second summit by a hitherto unclimbed rock buttress on the south side.

Back we went, now in dense clammy fog, turning to rain. The alarm was laid aside.

So were our plans. We had lost a day in a close-fitting programme. Over supper, crowded into the Olgi tent, we discussed them. Svanetia and Sukhumi, the antidote to our Spartan existence, now seemed very doubtful, but we deferred a decision till tomorrow and crawled to rest and shelter from the rain into our various tents.

27th July. This morning up at 5 a.m. The question of what to do was settled for us by the weather, which has broken in earnest. We packed our baggage and ferried it in several 'carries' down to the river in rain and mist; everyone was soon soaked.

Down we went huddled over our wet baggage at the back of the open truck, lurching, bouncing, slithering perilously at the edge of the precipice, through the great limestone gorge of the Cherek and along to Naltchik, where we drew in at Spartak base for petrol at 7 p.m. Then on, cold, cramped and tired, for another two hours, along the good road now, to Mineralne Vody. We received a splendid welcome from Uri Borshenko, the airport official whose English is so good. We threw off our muddy, sopping clothes and, almost presentable, appeared in

the ornate velvet-draped dining-room to do justice to a repast which had been foremost in our minds for many hours. Salad, chicken soup, steaks and fried egg, cheese—washed down with bottles of white and red Georgian wines. Toasts were drunk—to Anatoli, our comedian Kiev engineer, who has been our companion on Ushba and in the Bezingi (he is to take part in an attempt on the North Face of Gestola, with the well-known Leonov, in the competition for the best face climb of the year): to Anatoli, the cheerful, friendly truck driver: to Alexandrevwitch and the Spartak Camp (they had most generously sent us gifts of plated, crested karabiners): to Uri Borshenko, our helpful airport host.

And so to bed.

As we flew back in the gathering darkness to Moscow in the late evening of 28th July, I could not help thinking what a worthwhile experience it had been. True, there was little original exploration about it; if you exclude a stretch of some 3,000 feet of virgin rock wall on the South face of Dych Tau, and the securing of a few modern Russian sketch maps of a few Caucasian valleys, there is nothing of special interest as a pioneering effort.

But quite apart from the satisfaction to ourselves of those big climbs, the real value was simply that of making friends with ordinary Russians on holiday; enjoying with them a common love of mountains and of our sport of climbing. While we were there, American and British troops entered the Lebanon and Jordan. While *Pravda* and *Iszvestia* were full of the wickedness of the warmongering West, when in Moscow posters were displayed pillorying the Anglo-American forces, and spontaneous demonstrations of workers were specially organized from the off-coming work shifts, we were being assured by our friends that they would see us, if need be, safely through the mountains into Turkey; or failing this, we were tantalized by the prospect they offered of climbing for the next twenty years in Siberia. At that moment, we were just individuals, enjoying being together. There was no disloyalty about it but, for the time being at least, this was not our quarrel.

It was worthwhile, simply to have established that relationship and to have the prospect ahead of us, of building up on it.

EXCITEMENT IN THE DOLOMITES

John Wilkinson

Last summer, in the Rifugio Torino, I happened to pick up a fairly recent Italian illustrated magazine. One photograph immediately caught my eye: it showed four young men with the North face of the Cima Grande di Lavaredo in the background. They had just engineered a fantastic new route up the 800 metres of overhanging wall to the left of the now classic North face route made by Comici in 1927. They had used rock drills and all kinds of other gadgets. Judging by the smiles on their faces they had enjoyed their climb—at least in retrospect—and this certainly reflected my own feelings on seeing that grim cliff once more. What memories that photograph brought back!

I caught my first glimpse of the Dolomites in 1950 from the summit of the Piz Bernina. A few days later Alastair's vintage Bentley was thundering its way through the gorges of the Val di Fassa, and when the dust had settled, we found ourselves in the village of Canazei. We strolled around in search of guide-books to the area, our nailed boots getting very queer looks from the inhabitants. Not a single shop had a guide-book in stock, but we eventually managed to borrow one to the Marmolada group from an obliging hotel owner, who was doubtless visualizing the vast amounts of alcohol we should consume on his premises on our return. We had little trouble with our choice of climb: the Marmolada it had to be. On our trudge up to the Contrin Hut, we were able to consider our objective. Not only is the Marmolada the highest peak (3,342 metres) in the Dolomites, but it also possesses the only glacier—a sweep of dirty ice covering the whole of the north side of the mountain. In contrast to the easy-angled North face, the mountain's South face consists of a line of vertical and overhanging crags about three miles long and 750 metres high. Three routes lead to the summit, but two of these were immediately dismissed as being beyond the strength of the party. A closer look from the Ombretta pass confirmed that the route we had chosen took the most reasonable line up that uncompromising face. The close look was followed by some hard sprinting as we heard the blood-freezing whistle of unseen rocks descending from the crags.

In the hut we made friends with two very tough Austrians who were laying siege to the formidable Soldà route, which at that time was awaiting its fourth ascent. One of them, Hans Lobenhoffer, had been on the 1939 Nanga Parbat

expedition, and, as a result of having been interned in India during the war, spoke English. The hut warden also spoke English, and, as she was young and beautiful, translating the guide-book was very pleasant. The Austrians departed to bivouac under their climb.

At 5.30 next morning we were on the Ombretta pass, watching the most repulsive and foreboding dawn I have ever seen: in the east, the distant peaks were covered with a curious haze and the sky was all shot with green and pink; the west was solid with thick cloud. Left to our own devices, we should have been back in bed within the hour, but external influences were at work. Overhead we could hear the sound of hammering: the Austrians were *in der Wand*. If they considered the weather to be sufficiently settled to embark on a Grade VI (superior) route, surely we were not going to be deterred from attempting a mere Grade IV? What we unfortunately did not realize was that they were merely reconnoitring.

George, Alastair* and I exchanged our nailed boots for, respectively, basket-ball boots, town shoes (with rubber stick-ons!) and tennis shoes. (At this stage we had not enough lire to buy vibrams.) The climb is split by horizontal rakes into three sections, the main difficulties being concentrated in the first. We were about half way up this when we were reluctantly compelled to admit that the weather had deteriorated: we were surrounded by thick cloud and the air was warm and damp. Alastair and I were perched on a chockstone jammed in a yard-wide vertical chimney, whilst George was happily situated on a ledge 50 feet below. We were busy debating retreat, when a noise akin to that of tearing calico shattered our argument. The storm had arrived. For the next two hours we had the first-hand experience of observing a mountain storm from a point very close to its centre. Our chimney soon became filled with a frothing torrent, and we received several electric shocks as lightning discharges hit the rock wall overhead. We had almost exhausted our repertoire of bawdy songs when the storm passed, and, sacrificing a few slings, we began to abseil down the face. This was a very trouser-fraying episode, as the hemp rope and the trousers were sodden. We were quite close to the ground when we heard jodels and saw the Austrians on the pass: they had kindly

* G. J. Ritchie (S.M.C.), A. W. Brown-Douglas (E.U.M.C.).

come to see if we were all right. We were chagrined to note that they were snuff-dry, having made a cocoon of plastic sheeting and sheltered under an overhang.

The climb, which we managed without much difficulty a couple of days later, seemed rather an anticlimax. The lower section was steep and exposed, with a number of mild severe pitches, mostly chimneys. The upper sections were less interesting and rather loose. The weather was still very unsettled and we arrived on the summit ridge just as another storm broke. I remember that my feet were extremely cold as a result of trudging in rubbers through ankle-deep hail stones. On the highest point of the Marmolada, the Punta di Rocca, a small shack has been constructed. We burst open the door, to be confronted by a display of liquor, the like of which I have not seen outside the bar of the New Dungeon Ghyll Hotel. Whether the owners of this palace ever intended mountaineers to reach the valley in one piece I do not know! I suspect that the purpose of this refreshment house is to enable guides to drug their clients before lowering them down the mountain.

The storm passed, and, having thawed out our frozen limbs, we began the descent over the Punta di Penia to the Forcella di Marmolada. This incredible route on the West ridge of the mountain was engineered during the 1914-1918 war, and bristles with gun emplacements, caves, wire ropes and stepladders. It was quite exposed in places, and the high wind and bitter cold, together with sections where iron stanchions had dropped out, made progress very slow. We were glad to be off the ridge, and, after recovering our boots, we just got to the hut before dark.

Some years later I again saw the Val di Fassa, once more through a curtain of driving rain. The early part of the 1953 season was notoriously bad, and Mac* and I had consumed vast quantities of cakes and ale in Chamonix and Soglio, but had done little climbing. We pressed on eastwards, Mac's Gold Star making short work of the Pordoi Pass. Cortina was just as dismal as Chamonix, and, as lire were vaporizing fast, we took to the hills. Eventually we arrived at the Rifugio Principe Umberto on the south side of the Tre Cime di Lavaredo. Here we met some old friends from the Paris section of the Club Alpin Français, and, after a day or two's

* I. G. McNaught-Davis (C.C.).

walking in the rain, we decided on action, come what might. At last the sun shone, and as Mac gingerly steered the motor-bike up the boulder-strewn mule-track to the Passo di Lavaredo, we discussed what we should climb on this, our first fine day. By some horrible misunderstanding, Mac got the impression that I was bursting with keenness to do something really hard, whereas my only wish was not to hold him back. The Spigolo Giallo on the Cima Piccola was our first choice, but on reaching the pass we could see several parties clinging to that vertical knife-edged arête, and rocks were already crashing down. So we talked ourselves into 'having a look' at the North face of the Cima Grande (Grade VI). 'After all, if we don't like it, we can always abseil off.' . . . We hid the motor-bike on the pass and traversed the screes below the overpowering crags. The Comici route starts up a small buttress which leans against the western end of the face. We scrambled up 200 feet or so, until the buttress ended in a large ledge. Above us loomed nearly two and a half thousand feet of overhanging cliff. We put on the rope. Although I had done little climbing that summer, Mac was in good form, and since he had had previous experience of artificial climbing, he undertook to lead—God bless him!

It was 7 o'clock in the morning and bitterly cold as Mac, festooned with slings, karabiners, pitons, hammer and étriers, led up a thin crack and did a rising traverse to the left on to the middle of the face. We were using the double-rope technique, and Mac clipped alternate ropes to the pitons which a generation of climbers had been unable to prise from the rock. Footholds seemed non-existent, so from every piton he hung a sling in which he placed his feet. The first 80 feet took him over an hour of strenuous exertion. He belayed standing on a microscopic ledge and clipped to several pitons. My turn. I had no idea just how strenuous artificial climbing could be. The most exhausting part of the operation was hanging on one sling in order to unclip a karabiner and sling at foot level. The next pitch was a long, horizontal traverse, and as there was no stance at all at the end of it, Mac belayed standing in our two home-made étriers—three rung step-ladders made from nylon cord and brass tubing one inch in diameter. I traversed to join him, the last move being very exciting as there were no holds at all, and it involved a short pendulum on a sling.

Now it was my turn to hang and look down the already appalling drop to the shell-pitted Great War battlefield below. Above, a battle of a different kind was in progress: Mac was wrestling his way from piton to piton up the vertical wall. So it went on, pitch after strenuous pitch, all vertical or overhanging, all climbed on slings and étriers. There was no relief whatsoever, no good resting place, no respite for the arms. A few hours of this, and my arms had almost given up the unequal struggle of hauling up my 13½ stone of out-of-condition flesh, and my fingers were stiffened into rigid claws. We now realized that we were well committed to the climb. The route traversed about so much that it would have been almost impossible to abseil down it. We also realized that we were rather poorly equipped for the climb. Instead of hanging slings from pitons we should each have had two étriers which we could have moved from piton to piton as we climbed. In addition, the steps of the étriers should have been of flat wood, not round brass, and should have been broad enough to accommodate a thigh when resting. Furthermore, the steps should have been linked by hemp, not nylon, thereby eliminating the disconcerting yo-yo effect. Several of our karabiners were very stiff, and the labour involved in struggling with these caused me to dangle on the rope several times.

The worst section of the climb was a black and overhanging corner. Very wet. Sixty feet up, an overhang necessitated a traverse to the right and an ascent to a small overhung ledge. This upper part was pitonless—one of the few 'free' passages we had encountered. Mac was very tired when he got to this point, the ropes being clipped to a dozen pitons, but he managed to get on to the ledge by making use of an old rotting sling which was hanging from a piton above. I struggled up until I was 10 feet below Mac, and here my progress stopped. I was almost too tired to care. An almighty heave on the rope got me a few feet higher, and Mac was able to lower me a sling from which I hung by my teeth in order to give my arms a rest. Then, making full use of the ancient hemp sling, I was soon clinging to Mac like a long-lost brother. At this stage, I noticed a karabiner, with a piton still clipped to it, dangling from the rope. No wonder the final part of the pitch had involved so great an output of energy; in my exhausted state, I had omitted to unclip a karabiner from a piton and

must have unknowingly pulled it out. Still—my efforts were trivial compared with those of the Cortina Squirrels, a band of enthusiastic purists who, in 1956, removed (intentionally !) a hundred and ten pitons from this climb. I swore at that moment that I would never do another completely artificial climb—and I never have.

It was now very late in the afternoon and we were still only a third of the way up the face. A battalion of singing Alpini was winding its way across a distant sunlit slope: I would have given much to have been down there, singing with them! Eventually we traversed left under an enormous overhang and climbed a crack which led—of all things—to a slab. This terminated at a ledge on which we could both actually sit with comfort. The time was eight in the evening, and we had already been on the face for thirteen hours. Overhead, the wall was split by a narrow, soaking-wet gully. We were up the crux, and felt that at last we could relax for a while. We hammered in a few pitons, and ate a sardine or two, washed down with crag-drippings, and with our legs dangling over 1,000 feet of fresh air, prepared to sit out the night. We dozed for a few hours, until awakened by the cold, then shivered till dawn. The weather seemed uncertain: cloudy and with showers of rain, and we were anxious to get off. At half-past five we could restrain ourselves no longer and set off up the gully. Slimy chimneys and cracks followed each other interminably, but at least there were no more Grade VI or artificial pitches. Morale improved with every foot of height gained. Eventually the route was blocked by an overhang and we were forced to traverse left across the face. The exposure was frightening—over 2,000 feet sheer to the screes. Mac was some 60 feet horizontally away from me, the ropes clipped through a couple of pitons. I could not quite reach the crucial handhold and a bulge in the rock was forcing me outwards. I knew that if I came off, I should swing below the overhang and would then be irretrievable, so something had to be done. I retreated to the nearest piton and threaded one of the ropes through the ring. Using this as a handrail, I just managed to balance round the corner. There was no more excitement after that, and at half-past eleven we were basking in the sunshine on top of the Cima Grande.

After a well-earned nap we removed the rope and began the tedious descent of the South face. Although technically

quite easy, the route wanders all over the face and is easily lost. We lost it—several times—but at last we could see the hut below us. We just could not bring ourselves to cook anything and went straight to bed. Some eighteen hours later we awoke—feeling very hungry. I was so stiff in the arms and shoulders that I could hardly put on my jacket for several days. The traverse of the Vajolet Towers which we made a few days later seemed like a Sunday afternoon stroll in comparison with the Cima Grande. We were suitably impressed when we learned that a lone Italian climbed the North face in three hours later that year.

Several seasons passed, and again bad weather forced us first from Chamonix, then from Courmayeur, and eastwards across the Italian plains. Time was short, so we made for the most westerly of the Dolomite groups—the Brenta. I had wanted to visit this area ever since I had read Meade's account of his ascent of the Guglia di Brenta (the Campanile Basso). We were lucky to get there, having demolished some road workings and terrified a few Teutonic Volkswagen drivers en route. Whilst I was hogging the road, Mac, Neil and Albert* were reclining on the luggage in the back of the Dormobile, ostensibly translating the guide-book. In due course, we reached the village of Molveno, for some reason always referred to as 'Malvolio' by the boys. This village is in a wonderful setting, on the edge of an emerald lake, with a backcloth of jagged rocky spires. Having tired of hurling boulders into the lake, and being satiated with *cassatas*, our thoughts turned at last to climbing. It was only with great difficulty that the boys were persuaded that the Campanile Basso was worthy of their attention, and I was threatened with all manner of dire consequences should the five-hour trudge up to the Tosa Hut not prove worthwhile.

The walk to the hut was delightful, although a little hot. A long valley, thickly wooded with pines, ended in an abrupt wall, up which the path zig-zagged dizzily. In several places the track consisted of a few old planks which bridged a considerable drop. The route continued over steep, alpen-rose-covered meadows, and finally up bare stony slopes to the hut, which was situated on a ridge. The views were superb and white vertical crags rose all around. To the east,

* I. G. McNaught-Davis (C.C.), N. Mather (R.C.), A. Ashworth (R.C., F.R.C.C.).

we could see the Marmolada and the Rosengarten group. A *fiasco* or two of Chianti heightened the effect of the alpenglow !

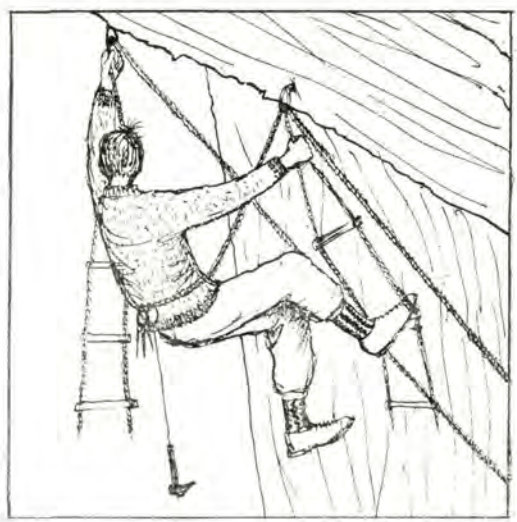
At the comparatively civilized hour of half-past eight next morning, we sauntered from the hut, and after losing the route—due to misreading the Italian guide-book—we eventually reached the foot of the Campanile Basso, which had been hidden by another massif. Mac and Albert, who were in an aggressive frame of mind, decided to climb the Fox route (Grade V superior) whereas Neil and I, feeling rather more pedestrian, settled for the ordinary route (Grade IV). Since the only guide-book available belonged to Mac, Neil and I had to make do with a garbled verbal account of our route. 'It's a rock plod—just follow the big ledges.' This was to have interesting consequences later.

The start of the climb was common to both routes: a near-vertical wall about 150 feet high, called the Parete Pooli. It was hard enough, but well-protected by pitons. Where the routes divided, Mac and Albert carried on up the steep stuff, while Neil and I enjoyed a rising spiral ascent of the tower: lots of chimneys and easy traverses. We were quite close to the top when things seemed to get harder all of a sudden. We were on a large ledge which ended on the right in an awe-inspiring drop. It was at this point that Meade lost the ordinary route and made his far more difficult variation. Round the corner to the left, the face was steep, smooth, and apparently holdless. Furthermore, it was in the shade. Above our heads, however, we could see a line of pitons. In fact, a small overhang about 100 feet up seemed to bristle with them. 'This must be the route.' Bad calculation on my part made it my misfortune to lead the overhanging pitch. The rocks were blisteringly hot in the sun—but the sweat running down my face was only partially caused by the heat ! A crack led up to the overhang and, once there, I clipped on to so many pitons that for the rest of the pitch the friction on the rope was so great that it was like dragging a barge. More steep climbing up the wall led to the summit. 'If that was Grade IV, we were certainly out of condition!'

The top was surprisingly large and was complete with a statue of the Madonna. Away to the north, the horizon was filled with the familiar shapes of the Tyrolean peaks. Closer and to the west, the smooth, snowy ridges of the Ortler looked

cool and very inviting. Shouts and whistles brought no response from below, so we assumed that Mac and Albert were still grappling with the Fox. However, it was so hot that we decided to wait for them in the shade, and began to descend. Large iron spikes with inch-thick rings had been driven into the rock to facilitate abseiling. The line of the first abseil was down the sunless smooth section that we had dismissed after a cursory inspection on our way up. We were surprised to see that the rock was not holdless after all; furthermore, there were several pitons in place. (We discovered later that Meade was not the only man to lose the ordinary route: we had done the Pooli Trenti variation—Grade V superior.) We were about half way down the climb when we heard shouts from above and saw Mac and Albert peeping over the edge of the summit. Abseiling from the large rings was quite a pleasure compared with the usual neurotic piton-bending operations, and soon we were at the foot of the Parete Pooli.

We felt, as we headed for the hut, 'Malvolio,' *cassatas* and Chianti, what can only be described by Mac's pet phrase: '*Molto soddisfazione.*'



BIDEAN NAM BIAN

Here it begins, the day we shall not forget,
With a change of wind at dawn. The rain drips
Still from the slates, but across the moor
The pearly light spreads, and, facing the sun,
The crags appear, slowly, plane behind plane
Shaping the dark cone, with punctuation
Of solid white left as the grey recedes.
O morning freshness of heart!
Down the road the air sings, the water sings
Beside us; but up on Beinn Fhada,
Where the angle eases, and snowdrifts
Succeed the rough wet outcrops,
There is only the music of breath and footfall.
Below, the bright brown pass still holds the sun;
Away to westward, our mountain
Spreads its limbs wide under pale shadow,
And beyond is the green Arctic light
Over the sea; to the north the high wildernesses
Regard us; and from Glen Etive pours the covering cloud.

Out of the mist the three white ridges converge,
Rise to the summit's blunted pyramid.—
Curious men, truth-lovers, closely questioning,
Peering, measuring, lifetime after lifetime,
Learn how these shapes were carved
By air and water in the sun's hand.
But who shall say what powers shaped us three,
Directed us inward from what distances,
Over what peaks and gaps, through obscurity
To make this perfect form, which stands
Beautiful and gracious now, overlooking
A wider territory than Argyll?

You know, standing with me on the snow crest—
You know, mountaineers, on other hills
Instructed—you know, music makers,
Choosing out of the infinite range of sounds
Created and dying the elements of eternal
Patterns—how the obvious harmony
By sudden unwilled comprehension becomes
Part of a harmony of higher order,
The soul gains freedom in a new dimension.
So was our triad seized,
Merged in the huge chord of the winter hills,
Our human love given its place in Love,
Our private design made suddenly significant
In the moment's vision of the Idea
Which is our origin, our life, our goal,
The Good.

Shine in us, shine,
When we descend again into the world of shadows.

The smooth grey road rises, falls, rises again,
From the throat of the pass to the bridge, from the bridge to the moor,
And the thick night covers
Bog and river and rough hills and sky.
Beside us the water sings, the air sings:
O blessed tiredness, blessed content!
Peace falls from the unseen crags; and ahead,
High ahead, is a gleam of yellow light
Where a door will open, to lamps and a smoky fire,
And love declared again in the breaking of bread,
And the day complete that we shall remember.

A. M. Dobson.

THE SOUTH FACE OF MONT BLANC

H. G. Stephenson

The South face of Mont Blanc—these words conjure up an impression of steep icefalls and long difficult ridges. What stories we had heard of its hanging glaciers and huge ice slopes, allowing no return and no escape. We hoped that three seasons in the Alps would prove a sufficient apprenticeship for climbs of this grandeur. The previous year, 1957, Dick Knight and I had completed five of the classic traverses in the Zermatt region: the Matterhorn by the Zmutt and Hörnli ridges; the Dent Blanche by the Viereselgrat and the South ridge; the Weisshorn by the Schalligrat and the East ridge; the six main summits of Monte Rosa and the WNW. face of the Dent d'Hérens. During a brief visit to Grindelwald we had also traversed the Schreckhorn. Now we were confronted with routes of greater magnitude where the weather and the condition of the mountain play an all-important part, and even the best parties can be forced to retreat.

In Courmayeur we met John Wilkinson and George Ritchie, and we agreed, over a bottle of Chianti, that the traverse of the Aiguilles du Diable on Mont Blanc du Tacul would provide a fitting start to the 1958 season. This gross over-confidence in our physical fitness very nearly proved our undoing, and it was soon obvious that we had chosen much too long a climb for the first.

The ridge consists of a series of imposing rock aiguilles—five in all. None of the rock climbing is extreme, the hardest pitches being IV sup. (severe). However, the presence of ice in the more difficult cracks, and the fact that most of the climbing is at a high altitude, delayed us considerably. It was dark when we dragged ourselves out of the final iced chimney on to the summit, and, in rapidly degenerating weather, dug ourselves in, huddling together in an attempt to maintain a reasonable body temperature. During the night nearly a metre of snow fell and buried all our scattered belongings.

At the first sign of daylight breaking through the blizzard we mustered forces for the return. Furious digging with the pick of an axe revealed most of our equipment, including a pair of boots and my new 'Retina' camera. Now we were ready for the descent, and moved off on an estimated compass course.

Four hours later we were back at our bivouac place, having wasted much time and effort cutting steps down an ever-steepening ice slope which had eventually ended in an impassable 300-foot ice cliff. This was obviously not the easy way off Mont Blanc! An increasingly powerful wind was now whipping the drift snow across the slopes, stinging any bared flesh. In one respect this apparent worsening of the situation was a blessing in disguise, as the cloud cleared for long enough to enable us to distinguish the Col du Midi in the depths below. After a hurried consultation and a re-orientation of the guide-book, we set off at right angles to our previous line of descent and made quick time back to the Glacier du Géant and the relative warmth of the Torino Hut.

Back at our camp site in the Val Veni, we spent two valuable days drying out equipment and restoring life to slightly frost-bitten toes, while more and more snow accumulated on the tops.

The prospect of only a limited holiday stirred us once more into action, and at 4 a.m. on the 26th of July, George, Dick and I stumbled in the dark through the woods surrounding the chalets of Fresnay on the first stage of an attempt on the Peuterey ridge. We were loaded with five days' provisions and the usual ice pitons, hammers, axes, stoves, etc., that are all part of such a climb. We had no intention of starving should we be trapped in the bivouac hut at the Brèche Nord des Dames Anglaises; many parties have been besieged here by bad weather, unable to move either up or down safely.

Pausing for a brief second breakfast at the Gamba Hut, we basked in the early morning sun which was now dispersing the sea of cloud that had enveloped the Val Veni a little earlier. We soon made the Col de l'Innominata, and could pick out the guide-book description of our proposed line of approach to the Bivacco Craveri.

The view from here is that of another world, terrifying in its immensity. Below us lay the Fresnay Glacier, the steepest in the Mont Blanc range, falling 7,000 feet in only a mile and a half, and giving the impression of a raging torrent frozen into apparent rigidity. This illusion of permanence is rudely shattered at frequent intervals, as huge séracs collapse and disintegrate into thousands of pieces. Here, a sérac does not merely fall, it slides and produces a minor ice avalanche down

the tumbled surface of the glacier, only to be swallowed up eventually by some of the many yawning crevasses.

From our position on the col, the most dominant feature was the West Wall of the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey, with its impressive series of penthouses and overhangs tracing out the route taken by the two Italians, Ratti and Vitali, nearly twenty years ago. Such a climb produces an inevitable feeling of admiration, and makes one's own hopes and aspirations appear insignificant.

However, there was no time to pause here and contemplate, for the serious work of the day still lay ahead. Having descended a loose couloir, we began to weave our way amongst the confusion of crevasses and séracs, making for a point well to the left of the obvious couloir descending from the Brèche Nord. This couloir is the normal route to the Bivacco Craveri, but is deemed to be exceedingly dangerous because of frequent stone-falls. Our own objective was the alternative approach by a diagonal couloir well to the left. This proved to be equally dangerous, as deep soft snow overlay hard ice in typical avalanche conditions. Belaying as carefully as such conditions would allow, and moving one at a time, it was late afternoon before we reached the point where the guide-book indicates that one should 'break out to the right to find the refuge-bivouac on the Fresnay face of the Brèche Nord.' The weather was deteriorating rapidly as we scrambled across loose rock, trying to find from this rather vague description an apparently non-existent bivouac hut. It was now snowing hard, and the situation was beginning to look serious. With only a vague hope that someone might be staying in the hut, we shouted into the mist. To our amazement, we heard an answering call.

On reaching the Brèche Nord, we saw our hut only twenty yards away on the Brenva face. So much for the accurate guide-book description! Two Germans, Erwin Stocker and Albert Hirschbichler, had just returned from an attempt on the Peuterey ridge, having turned back at the Pointe Guglielmina when it started to snow. The five of us were to become firm friends during the next few days on the mountain.

After a surprisingly comfortable night in this small five-man aluminium hut wired to a ledge, we spent the next day drying clothes in the weak rays of a very watery sun, and memorizing

the guide-book description of the rest of the climb. This day of inactivity was forced upon us because the bad weather had not cleared until 8 a.m. In the late afternoon we were forced to return to our shelter as the sun disappeared behind the imposing mass of the Aiguille Noire.

Throughout the night we listened to the rain beating on the roof of the shelter. At 4 a.m. the rain had stopped, but the sky was still heavily overcast, and so we returned to our blankets. We woke again at 6 a.m. and a rapidly clearing sky enticed us to go for the top, rather than face the treacherous descent of the couloir in such poor snow.

The first part of the route traversed the loose rock we had descended when we were looking for the hut. Turning the Pointe Gugliermina on the Brenva side, we gained an obvious circular brèche by crossing a series of steep ribs and iced couloirs. At this early stage in the climb speed was essential, and, despite the impressive sense of exposure, we moved separately, without the rope, only joining as two separate parties of three and two for the final curving snow ridge to the summit of the Aiguille Blanche (SE. point). We traversed the Pointe Centrale and the NW. point in rapid succession, and then started to descend diagonally towards the Col de Peuterey. This proved difficult, as the mist had again closed in. Having carefully descended steep rocks covered in soft snow, we reached the final ice slope leading down to the col. This had been swept clear of snow by the now biting wind, disclosing steep green ice in which it would have taken many hours to cut the necessary steps. Obviously this was the reason for the vague guide-book time, 'Descent to Col de Peuterey—forty-five minutes to six hours.' There was only one solution to this problem, and that was to abseil from an ice piton; joining our two 200-foot lengths together, it was just possible, with the stretch in these medium-weight nylon ropes, to bounce over the bergschrund into soft snow.

Crouching over our precious petrol stove in the deep snow of the col, we hurriedly prepared a bowl of soup. Barely lukewarm at this altitude, it was just sufficient to give us strength to tackle the remaining 3,000 feet to the summit. In fine weather, the massive wall of Mont Blanc de Courmayeur, which lay in front of us, must surely be one of the most impressive views in the whole of the Alps.

On all sides we could hear the ceaseless clatter of stone-fall and an occasional avalanche sweeping the face. It was now 3.30 p.m., and the guide-book time to the summit was still 'five to eleven hours from the col'—not a very satisfactory state of affairs. Another bivouac was obviously imminent.

In order to gain the rock buttress of the Grand Pilier d'Angle, it was necessary to cut both hand and footholds over the bergschrund, and traverse a steep soft snow slope. The ridge itself was quite straightforward, apart from one severe rock step of only twenty feet. Rather than waste time taking off crampons, in went a piton, and, by swinging up on a karabiner, the pitch was completed.

Now all that remained was the last 1,700 feet of steep ice arêtes to the top of Mont Blanc de Courmayeur (15,647 feet). The ridge seemed endless, crest upon crest of green ice with a dangerous covering of about two inches of soft snow. Then, quite suddenly, it started to get dark, and, to make matters worse, the icy wind now brought with it a fierce hail-storm sweeping across the slope. In such a dangerous situation, the only course of action open to us, if we were not to spend the night on this fifty-degree ice slope, was to stop belaying and move together, using the Continental technique of climbing on the front horizontal crampon points, with the pick of the axe held in one hand as an additional safeguard.

In spite of the rarity of the air we managed to keep up our speed, and I for one was pleased to find myself in such good form. We could now only sense the never-ending ice ridge looming out of the darkness and the open void dropping 5,000 feet behind us to the Brenva Glacier. The deluge of hail flowed down the slope, and, as it built up, tried to push us off the mountain. The slope showed no sign of relenting and I began to wonder if we were destined to reach the summit at all, when suddenly, after a slight increase in gradient, we broke through the cornice and stood on the top of Mont Blanc de Courmayeur. My own feelings were those of relief, that we should at last have escaped from that nightmare ice slope, and that I could now rest my aching limbs.

The wind and hail became worse, and the feeble light of the torch was continually being dimmed by an accumulation of ice. If we were to survive at all in this blizzard it was essential to find or construct some cover immediately. It

was obviously very dangerous to blunder around in the dark, as we might inadvertently find a weak spot in the cornice. Therefore we set to with ice-axes and dug in the snow a pit, barely two feet deep, but providing just that necessary protection. Dick and George joined our two German friends in their Zdarsky sack, while I settled down in my hole in the snow and thrust my feet deep into a large polythene bag for added protection against the biting wind. I promised the four in the tent a hot drink and lit the stove by the simple expedient of pouring petrol over it and igniting. However, the stove soon succumbed to the combined effects of wind and altitude and gave up the fight. What little melted snow there was in the pan soon froze again, and we were reconciled to a long miserable night's vigil.

Towards dawn my shivering became uncontrollable, and, despite repeated calls, all was silent in the tent; quite naturally none of them wished to face the elements. Eventually I interested Erwin in the prospect of finding the Vallot Hut. Within a quarter of an hour we had strapped on our crampons in spite of numb fingers, and at 5 a.m. we moved off towards the top of Mont Blanc, expecting the others to follow a short distance behind. We were literally blown up the easy snow ridge to the summit, where we waited.

Three-quarters of an hour passed and still we waited, rapidly losing our freshly gained body warmth, despite the combined protection of duvets and windproofs. There was obviously nothing for it but to return to our bivouac place, which we found deserted. Almost immediately, three ice-clad figures loomed out of the mist. They had lost our tracks and were now retracing their steps. After rewinning those precious 200 feet to the summit, we all plunged down what the compass indicated as the Bosses Arête. Fortunately it is impossible to miss the Vallot Hut on the crest of the ridge. It was 9 a.m. as we fled from the storm into the shelter of that aluminium ice box, just as we were, with rope and crampons still on, resembling five grotesque snowmen.

Hot soup was soon consumed, and we decided to attempt the descent to Chamonix immediately, before the storm grew any worse. A thousand feet below the hut we had to admit ourselves completely lost, and retrace our rapidly vanishing steps. Back at the refuge, we reconciled ourselves to yet

another night on the mountain. We started the cooker up and tried to thaw out our frozen clothes, meanwhile attempting to massage some life back into frostbitten feet.

The squalor of the Vallot Hut is indescribable, and 'bed-time' did little to improve our opinion. Four wet blankets and the tent-sack were evenly distributed, and we settled down to 'rest' with the iron frames of the bed gnawing into our bones. Lying there longing for morning to come, we might just as well have been back at our bivouac place on Mont Blanc de Courmayeur.

Fifteen degrees of frost in the hut heralded a fine still day. With the remainder of our petrol we heated up some sugared water, attempting to thaw out our frozen clothes and boots at the same time. Despite the offensive smell of burning leather and damp socks, this evil looking brew was consumed, and we were off on our triumphant descent. Under the heat of the sun our clothes rapidly dried as we made good time over the Dôme du Goûter and down the Aiguilles Grises. After a brief pause at the Gonella Hut, we continued our weary way down the Miage Glacier and back to our camp site in the Val Veni. Thus we could claim our route, even though it had taken five days in all.

The North face of the Dent du Géant and the Route Major provided a satisfying finish to a short though successful season, further thoughts of the Hirondelles ridge of the Grandes Jorasses being discarded, as a sprained ankle coupled with aching calves and frostbitten toes proved too painful. What matter, had we not proved ourselves on the longest and most famous ridge of this Monarch of the Western Alps?

SCOTTISH INTERLUDE

Jack Carswell

Most of my Scottish week-ending is done in winter. Consequently I was pleased to accept an invitation to join Eric Arnison, Malcolm Milne and George Spenceley for a week-end in August. Five o'clock on Friday evening found my wife waiting outside the works with the car, ready to drive me to Carlisle, whilst I ate the packed tea which she had provided. The rest of the party was waiting in Carlisle and my equipment was quickly transferred to Malcolm's car; within minutes my wife was on her way back to Workington and we were heading north for Lochaber.

A transport café provided us with a cheap evening meal, over-garnished perhaps with potatoes, but we had no complaints at two shillings a head. Glasgow was celebrating Fair Week when we arrived and we had a hazardous trip across the city. Malcolm was quite relieved to reach the comparative quiet of the Great Western Road without mishap. Glasgow celebrates like no other place in the world, wholeheartedly and with no inhibitions.

We pitched one tent by the Coninish Burn near Tyndrum in total darkness and all crowded in somehow to wait for morning. Morning brought that dewy freshness which seems to precede a fine day (or a wet one!) and George provided an excellent breakfast on his rather ferocious cooking stove. Over breakfast we decided to do the North Climb on the Central Buttress of Buachaille Etive, followed by Agag's Groove, and I was glad about this as it is one of my favourite routes: a natural linking up of two climbs of similar standard, though quite different character, going through magnificent rock scenery and giving, I like to think, 1,000 feet of climbing, nowhere more than Very Difficult. I have never checked up on the actual footage in case it falls short, and I want to keep my illusions.

After crossing Rannoch Moor with its wonderful view of Buachaille Etive which never fails to thrill and surprise one, we parked the car at Coupal Bridge. From there we set off across the boggy moor, each following his own individual line, our routes converging at the more difficult crossings, until the way rose abruptly and steeply to the foot of the rocks, which, incidentally, are amongst the lowest on the mountain and only about an hour from the road.

The first portion of the climb leads easily over clean grey slabs to the Heather Terrace, where food, photographs and rests were taken according to inclination. We then started on the much finer portion above the Terrace.

The route goes off to the right and becomes exposed at once, leading round a corner and up a detached pillar, the top of which forms a suitable place on which to hang a comforting, but not very necessary loop, to safeguard the rather awkward stride to a ledge well furnished with belays. This ledge forms a good take off for the next pitch which consists of a steep crack with an awkward landing on to a difficult gangway which is traversed to a poor stance and belay.

The successful negotiation of this pitch took a little time and landed us by the great white scar which is such a feature of the face as seen from below. Another few feet brought us to the foot of a big square open chimney, rather wet, which contains the only bit of doubtful rock on the climb. The damp poor rock required careful climbing in vibrams, and it was some time before we were all gathered on the large heather ledge above, surveying the steep, blank-looking wall across which goes the continuation of the route.

The footholds for the next move slope almost to vanishing point and the problem is solved only by adopting an exaggerated version of the classic body clear position. This is difficult to establish, but once achieved, the way goes easily enough across to a steep crack, furnished with magnificent holds, which ends at a fine rocky bower with a good belay. This bower commands a wonderful view as the buttress is not tucked away in a corrie, but stands boldly up on the edge of the brown moor which rolls away for twenty miles to Schiehallion; and on the next pitch the climber is able to savour his position to the full. A 100-foot runout over clean, steep, grey rock with adequate holds and a complicated route gloriously exposed, leads all too soon to the junction with the Curved Ridge which forms a perfect vantage point from which to survey the Rannoch Wall which rises just across the scree.

We lounged in the sun for a while trying to identify the climbs and watching other climbers on the face. One of these parties occupied Agag's Groove, and as soon as they were clear we moved across the scree and started the climb.

This route is quite different from the previous one and diagonally crosses the unusually steep wall by means of a groove equipped with splendid holds. This groove disappears two-thirds of the way up the wall, reappearing again about eighty feet higher. The re-entry into this part is in an extremely exposed position and is considered the crux of the climb. At the top of the pitch it is necessary to straddle a sort of elephant's forehead, with hands and feet using holds on each side. All went well until we reached this point. I had crossed the wall and had reached the straddling position when I felt the pyjama legs which I wear under windproofs begin to slide down and pinion my legs. The rest of the pitch became a race between me and the pyjamas which I won by inches. My rapid acceleration apparently alarmed Eric, who made pointed remarks about 'rat up a spout tactics' until he found out what had happened.

A further steep pitch on small holds brought us to the crest of the ridge. After forgathering, we coiled the rope and crossed back to the Curved Ridge which we descended on our way to the car and Fort William.

That night in Fort William we dined on fish and chips eaten from the paper, while sitting on bollards on the quayside feeding the gulls with scraps. As we climbed back up the steep little street into the town, we met a small Scotsman and a large Scotswoman lending each other support as they staggered down the hill together. This sight proved altogether too much for Malcolm and he gave a loud laugh as we passed. This incensed the little Scot who came back to remonstrate, starting with the remark, 'I'll have you know that lady is my wife.' The new twist to the old tag was lost on nobody but him. We left the diplomacy in Malcolm's professional hands, but even he, armed with a bribe of fish and chips from his paper, failed to achieve any result, and we found ourselves invited to a gang fight in the park. This provided the opening we needed and we despatched him to look for his gang whilst we went for our car. Some time later as we drove away towards Glen Nevis, we saw him still looking for either gang or wife, if indeed he had not forgotten about both by that time.

The following morning was damp and misty and any hopes we had entertained of doing the Long Climb on Nevis

vanished long before we reached the Inglis Clark hut in the Allt a 'Mhuillin.

About this time George, who had been complaining of stomach trouble, elected to go back to camp. We undertook to be back by four o'clock and he promised to pack and to have a meal ready so that we could get away quickly. We went on to try to find our way on to the North East Buttress, a matter of some difficulty in the prevailing conditions, visibility being down to a rope's length. Time was short and we were anxious not to make any false moves or to get involved in climbing anything too difficult, so we examined every line carefully before committing ourselves to it. As we rose higher the wind and rain increased making the Man Trap, when we reached it, appear quite formidable. Indeed, it lived up to its reputation admirably, snapping its jaws viciously as we each in turn grappled with its wet, slimy difficulty.

We left the summit at three o'clock, but Eric was quite confident that we should be in camp by four as arranged; and sure enough we were, even though the mist was down below 2,000 feet. In spite of wind and rain, we found the Red Burn and shortly afterwards emerged below the mist into another climate. George watched us as we plunged down from the zigzags, and by the time we arrived in camp was well prepared to receive us right on time. After our meal we had soon packed and were on our way south.

Being bona fide travellers, we had a good journey down to Carlisle where I spent the night in the station waiting room, travelling home on the milk train, with just enough time to put on a workaday suit, a workaday face and join once again the crowd going through the works gates, this time in the opposite direction.

Another Scottish Interlude was over.

PURIST TAKES TO PITONS

O. S. Heavens

Lying at the foot of one's chosen route, the eyes roving lazily over the valley below, or perhaps looking upwards, from upside-downwise, at the first pitches, peaceful anticipation is ruffled by ominous approaching sounds. An odd rattling-cum-clanking, suggestive of a not-so-distant railway (a fleeting, ghastly vision of Great Gable Station—next train for Brackenclose, calling at Moses' Finger, Gavel Neese and Pharaoh's Halt) materializes in the form of two laden figures, cocoon-like and wearing what appear to be metal skirts. Strange Hawaiian garlands, of a dozen slings and some twenty karabiners, surmount ludicrous sporrans of ironmongery, with further trimming provided by pendent hammer and graceful loops of thin string, thick string, thin cord, thick cord—all in distinctive colours. The jangle of tinware is matched by the visual jangle dominated by the bright blue rope and the fluorescent jade green socks.

Wondering whether there are any more in the party, one looks down, almost expecting the glint of aluminium ladders or collapsible derricks. No. The jangle has ceased, giving place to the purposeful ring of hammer against peg, thrusting relentlessly into some harmless fissure. With a shudder and a sad shake of the head, one gets slowly up, looks affectionately up at the route which one is about to take—without artificial aids, apart from rope, slings, karabiners, boots and guide-book (not that one will lose the way—plenty of scratches)—and seizes the first jug. . . .

We were gliding peacefully along the river in the Firefly, powered by a light-to-moderate south-easterly, and John was describing a climb which he had recently enjoyed and which he believed to be a first ascent. He regaled me with somewhat harrowing details of how he had perched precariously for half-an hour in one place while his leader, hidden behind a fearsome-looking bulge, hurled down a few hundredweight of loose rock and general flora, most of which whistled by a few inches from the back of John's neck. I expressed some interest in the route—interest which became mixed with a shade of trepidation when told that it was thought to be 'a good V.S.' Recollections of climbs of this standard had become somewhat dimmed by more recent memories of bitter struggles, albeit in poor conditions, on routes two or three grades easier. John seemed, however, cheerfully to accept the

prospect that his second might prove a liability and the date was fixed. Details (somewhat sparse) of the location of our impending sport were conveyed in due course.

Route-finding problems began on arrival in the district. Local assistance was sought and resulted in some picturesque drives to and fro along various valleys but with no sign of the crag anywhere. The last word on the subject was spoken by a portly little man in deerstalker and yellow waistcoat. 'There's no such place. I ought to know—I've lived here forty years. Come October that is. Just isn't any such place.' After which we immediately met the remainder of the party, cursing heartily for having spent the past hour careering madly around in search of us. Our destination proved to be well under a quarter of a mile from the scene of the portly gentleman's vehement denials.

The bottom of the crag was reached after a hazardous traverse over a half-mile of thin, oozy mud, left by a departing tide. The face was certainly impressive. The first 250 feet, which led to a large ledge, were vertical—that is, about 80 degrees. The top section sloped back at an easier angle and, thus foreshortened, looked a mere 30 feet more. It turned out to be about 100 feet of loose, rotten, vegetatious rock. I scanned the wall, looking for the crack, groove or chimney which would most likely form the first route up a virgin face. There weren't any. While I searched unsuccessfully for anything remotely climbable, I heard a rattling-cum-clanking close by and turned, with mounting horror, to see John delving into his rucksack and ladling out a vast collection of ironmongery. There they were—pegs, hammers, slings by the dozen. 'You see,' explained John, 'there are no natural belays on the whole face. A great big quarryman's spike about 100 feet up, but that's all.' For a fleeting moment, I wondered how he knew that the quarryman had been big—he didn't seem to be around any more. For a further fleeting moment the purist inner man muttered something about 'not going to hammer *pegs* into the rock?' before he was told to be quiet ('must move with the times'—'different sport, that's all'—'no justifiable "straight" climbs left'—'anyway, you use the pegs merely as *belays*'). With no more than the faintest pang of guilt on my part, principles went overboard, I wrapped four slings and two or three odd lengths of rope round me, hung a hammer on my belt and

paid out the rope as John moved neatly up to the first real obstacle—a sentry-box below an overhang. In went a peg and John spent the next forty-five minutes alternately teetering spreadeagled, trying to get a left foot beside his left shoulder, and standing panting on the two-inch hold below the peg. It went finally, giving on to an easier, though still murderously steep section, so that he had several further minutes of climbing before he could allow himself to relax after the exhaustion of the sentry-box. I pondered. It seemed to me that to suggest that he descend again would be interpreted as an unfriendly gesture. If however my limbs proved just too inelastic—what then? ('Perhaps he carries pulleys amid the tinware. Next time I shall bring the Firefly's mainsheet and blocks.') In fact, the box went at the third bite and proved to be a really delicious balance move—reminiscent of Harrison's sandstone. On reaching the leader, my self-confidence had improved out of recognition. I accepted his invitation to lead the next pitch—with his assurance that there was no further sentry-box—and set off. It was sheer delight—very steep, mainly sound and with holds enough but no more. It was almost as though the face had been designed to ensure that one climbed well. There was no question of climbing clumsily—one either climbed neatly and in perfect balance, or one didn't get up. The quarryman's spike was reached ('Ah! I see. It was the *spike* that was big')—a comforting, substantial belay after wee pegs. John joined me and we watched our two companions, who seemed to be tearing the right-hand half of the crag down, putting a new route up some fifty feet away.

We pressed on, enjoying every minute of this continuously exhilarating route and fetched up on the broad ledge below the final section. We lazed here until our companions reached us, scrambled up the remaining (rotten) 100 feet and, with permission, crossed the garden of the bungalow at the top of the face, there being no other escape. The name suggested for the climb—'The Straight Way'—sprang from the quite casual comment of the owner of the bungalow, a charming old lady, when John and his companion had first appeared at her garden fence. 'Oh, you came up *there*? Nobody came up the straight way before.'

LAKELAND STORMS, 1958

P. G. Satow

Our knowledge of rainfall in the Lake District is founded upon the work of voluntary observers scattered around counties of the north-west. At some rainfall stations, observers have most diligently continued to take daily readings for over half a century. In any undertaking of this kind continuity is essential if the odd occasions when exceptional rainfall occurs are not to be missed. As a result, these daily measurements are made at 9 a.m. by Greenwich Mean Time throughout the year. But although 24-hour totals provide daily figures, monthly and annual totals, there are sometimes heavy falls in shorter periods of time which have a special interest and importance.

Our main concern with heavy rainfall is in the flooding of waterways, and in the damage to walls, roads, livestock and property. There are also occasions when torrential falls occur over mountain areas: landslides may follow which will substantially alter the configuration of gullies and screes. Such storms are usually of a localized nature; they can be studied from three aspects:—

(1) The source and structure of the air masses carrying storm clouds into the region;

(2) Continuous graphical records of the rainfall over very short periods of time, say consecutive 5-minute intervals;

(3) Visual observation.

The first of these is really a task for the student of meteorology, although the presentation of simple weather charts on television and in certain national daily newspapers has led to a wider understanding of the sources of weather affecting this country.

Secondly, a continuous graph of rainfall intensity can only be obtained by the use of a special type of automatic recording gauge—an item of equipment beyond the pocket of the ordinary voluntary observer. However, several such gauges are kept in the Lake District on behalf of River Boards and Corporations maintaining reservoirs. If one is fortunate enough to have a storm pass over one of these gauges, a valuable record of rainfall intensity can be secured. In the case of localized storms, some such evidence of the short-period rainfall is essential, if any attempt is to be made to relate the peak rate of precipitation to damage.

Thirdly, visual observation includes the careful notation of all details which may subsequently help in the analysis. Amongst these are the exact direction and distance of strikes of 'fork lightning,' the position, timing and movement of storm clouds, the timing and extent of flooding and of damage to walls, river banks and so on. Voluntary observers have been contributing on these lines to the Thunderstorm Census Organization of Great Britain, and knowledge of storm activity has increased greatly over the past twenty years.

During the late summer of 1958 there were three 'waves' of unusually severe storms which struck various parts of the Lake District. These occurred during the late afternoon and evening of 10th August, 6th September and 6th October, some of them rolling on into the first half of the night. The intervals between these dates are 27 and 30 days respectively.

The storms of August and September resulted from the arrival of very warm and humid air from the western Mediterranean, assisted by high temperatures over the land and a seasonal peak of sea temperatures off-shore. The air responsible for these electrical storms moved on an almost direct track from the 'steam heat' of the Mediterranean summer towards the NNW., crossing France and England *en route*. Convective activity in the thunder clouds was given a final boost by the rising slopes on the south-east side of the Lake District. As clouds reached their peak of development they were moving fairly slowly over the mountains. At this stage in their long passage from the south, fierce thunderstorms broke out and there was considerable 'fork lightning' to ground by which telephone and power supplies were disrupted.

Immediately the ground started to level off, and then to fall away below the storm clouds, vast quantities of water in suspension were suddenly deprived of much of their support. The result was a series of cloudbursts. In some cases huge raindrops were accompanied by even larger hailstones, and the combined downpour descended with tremendous force. Some gullies were disembowelled, new screes were formed, and in several cases—notably in Eskdale and at Hollow Stones —loose stones were carried far beyond the former limits, on to grass where scree had never lain before. Some of these rock avalanches, below Scafell Crag and Napes Ridges, were accompanied by boulders weighing at least 50 tons.

The storms of 6th October resulted from weather activity of a different type. They accompanied a vigorous squall-line which came in from the Atlantic. Once again they were given extra 'lift' by passage across high ground. However, although these thunderstorms were producing very heavy rain, hailstones of unusual size, and even some 'ball lightning,' they were advancing at about twice the speed of those which occurred in the two preceding months. As a result, flood waters descending from high ground did not get the same chance to build up.

Part of the October storm area passed over an automatic recording gauge belonging to the Lancashire River Board which is sited in Great Langdale. A maximum rate of 2.2 inches per hour was recorded over a short period. However, hailstones collected in the funnel of the gauge took some time to melt and did not add to the chart record of the fall until later. Furthermore, the gauge was situated 4 miles to the leeward of Bowfell, and the intensity would probably have declined a little by that time. Another point to be considered is that precipitation at the 3,000-foot level is about 60 per cent. higher than at the site of the gauge (372 feet above mean sea-level).

Autographic records in other parts of the country listed in *British Rainfall* show that summer storms can produce precipitation rates on low ground of 4 inches per hour. From these various factors we may reasonably deduce that rates of rainfall exceeding 6 inches per hour have occurred in similar storms over the mountains. This is more than ten times what is normally regarded as 'heavy rain' in Britain. The duration of rainfall of such 'tropical' intensity will depend largely on the size of individual clouds and their speed of movement relative to the ground; but the duration of any one cloudburst is unlikely to exceed about half an hour. There is always the possibility that a second storm may follow on a similar track to one ahead of it. When there is convergence of airstreams, storm clouds may merge to give extensive areas of heavy rain. There is also just a chance that a slow-moving thunderstorm, drifting into the Lake District from south-east or east in the late afternoon or evening, may meet a sea breeze from the opposite direction, coming in over the Cumberland coast. By this means clouds

could be somewhat retarded and the downpour might be prolonged.

From the evidence of Fell & Rock members in the area, and from some residents of long standing, it seems that the summer storms of 1958 were of unusual severity. In general, the 'wash-outs' which resulted have been more extensive than anything witnessed over the past twenty to thirty years. Nevertheless it must be appreciated that a cloudburst can occur at almost any time between June and October, given suitable weather conditions. There is no reason to suppose that any particular cycle of sunspots or other phenomena is responsible.

With the passage of time the new screes will weather and blend with the darker backgrounds. Before this occurs some of them are worthy of inspection. These include gullies on Pike's Crag, the NW. side of Mickledore, and the foot of Scafell Crag—all of which can be seen from Hollow Stones. Shingle from Lingmell has been carried across the footpath to Brown Tongue, and there was a big rock fall on the other side of Scafell, near Fox Tarn. Others can be seen in upper Eskdale and from the track between Wasdale Head and Styhead, where the lighter shade of boulders identifies the ones which rolled down. In some instances it is possible to trace the track of individual rocks which have damaged more solid pieces on their way down. In April, 1959 all these areas of storm damage from the previous summer were still easily identifiable.

A visitor to Wasdale Head was ascending the footpath leading to Styhead. He was studying the new scree and boulders in deep thought. In due course he asked: 'Does this kind of thing happen often? If it has gone on through the ages,' he said, 'many of the Lakeland mountains must originally have been over 4,000 feet high.' Perhaps some of our geological experts can enlighten us.

SOME ESKDALE ROCK CLIMBS

John Lagoe

Eskdale has never had much attraction for rock climbers. To be popular with them, a valley must have either big crags to hand, or easy access, or both; and Eskdale has neither. Its largest crag, Esk Buttress, is better reached from Wasdale, and to get into the dale itself requires a hard drive or a roundabout rail journey.

Yet the longer journey is worth while, for climbers as well as walkers, as this article hopes to show. If you fancy climbing somewhere new, on unscratched routes relatively free from vegetation, or even doing a bit of pioneering, Eskdale is the place for you. Choose where to stay from two hotels, many farms, and the Youth Hostel, all in or around Boot village, and leave your umbrella at home: Eskdale is much drier than most other Lakeland valleys especially in its middle and lower reaches.

No doubt a few climbs of one sort or another have been made in Eskdale from time to time, but apart from the Esk Buttress routes, little has been recorded.* Sid Cross tells me that he and A. T. Hargreaves, when they lived in Eskdale, scrambled about on many of the crags, but their minds were usually on bigger and better things, and the time had not yet come when one thought of the smaller cliffs as serious climbing grounds.

Even now that shorter routes are acceptable, there has as yet been no systematic assault on Eskdale crags, but since the Outward Bound Mountain School opened in 1950 various parties of instructors have sporadically explored the possibilities. A good number of worthwhile routes have been made and there is plenty of untouched rock still.

At first the nearby outcrops were looked at for short practice climbs, and two 20-foot granite crags on Fell End provided all we needed. At the present time, both have artificial hazards: one an unfriendly farmer at Hollinghow Farm, the other an expansion bolt for belay at the top.

* In No. 8 (1914) of the *Journal*, Harry Midgley in *Why not Eskdale?* mentions Birker Force, the Eskdale Needle, Harter Fell, some good substantial rock east of Birker Moor and, on Cam Spout Crag, Peregrine Gully. In *Climbs Old and New* of this same number (page 89) a gully in Cam Spout Crag (probably Peregrine Gully) is described. Peregrine Gully is dismissed in the *Scafell Guide* as unpleasant with 'a little climbing on rotten rock at the top,' its first ascent being ascribed to P. Lund, C. Becket and T. Gray, 12th April, 1903. The authors of the *Guide* were unable to identify Cam Spout Buttress (pioneered by C. D. Frankland and party in 1923).

Heron Crag, up valley from Taw House, soon attracted attention. Studied from across the dale, likely lines are numerous, but seen from the foot, or in profile, its steepness is fearsome. Many early visits produced nothing more than broken climbing on a separate buttress, beyond a wide, dirty, unpleasant gully, which bounds the main crag on the left (south-west). The first parties usually tried a steep chimney or groove, full of trees, just left of the main nose of the crag, and always retreated after 25 feet at an overhanging pitch. After one such sad set-back on a June evening in 1955, the frustrated second, his gaze directed permanently upwards through watching his leader's struggles for so long, spotted a 'possibility' more suited to his standard and promptly climbed it. So Heron Corner was made: a nice V. Diff. in dry weather, but sometimes very wet. It is well scratched now by several hundreds of Outward Bound boys, and a rusty piton still provides a more convenient belay than the natural one after the first pitch. The climb has finer situations and is more exposed than appears from below.

At the very next visit the old point of attack yielded, and the tree-studded chimney-groove was climbed to the top, graded Hard Severe, and named Babylon. So far as I know this route has not been repeated. Heron was then neglected for some time, but several people noticed a striking corner to the right of the main nose, and reached the foot of it by climbing an easy square chimney. The first serious attempt in May, 1958 succeeded. Bellerophon, the third climb on Heron, is 200 feet, Very Severe. It too awaits a second ascent, but a variation start has been found to the left of the chimney, harder and so more in keeping with the whole climb.

Beyond doubt the best is yet to be. The main nose, with a remarkable flake half way up seen in profile on the way from Taw House, and the whole right wing of the crag, overhanging by several feet at the bottom, remain untouched, waiting for some V.S. pioneers.

Nearer home, almost every crag on the adjacent fellside eventually yielded a problem or two, and on Hollinghead Crag above Spout House farm, there are enough routes to merit a brief visit. Besides a three-pitch Diff. and a Severe groove, a technically artificial climb has been made up the huge slab

which is the most noticeable feature of the crag; this by a German Outward Bound instructor in November, 1958.

Gate Crag, directly opposite Boot, has deceptively attracted would-be makers of new climbs. After many visits, two routes exist, one made in 1951, the other in 1955. Both are hard Very Diff. and provide good climbing with a scarcity of belays. On the one ascent of the longer route, Bosigran, two pitons were used in opposing cracks to belay at the top of the first 75-foot pitch. Apart from these two climbs, nothing worth recording has been done, but the crag is long, and, for a determined party, there must be a good bag of first ascents waiting.

At the north-eastern end of Gate Crag, Birker Force provides an interesting scramble with a Very Diff. finish on the left of the waterfall in dry weather, but in it, and impossible, when the beck is in spate. At the other end, Stanley Gill has three footbridges much frequented in summer by trippers from the 'ratty,' but its unusual scenery and large fall are worth seeing, and can be taken in on the way to Gate Crag. The safe route out of the gill is up the track on the right-hand side just above the second bridge, but the biggest fall is higher, and the way up the left side is an easy, if loose, scramble, finishing with a moderate pitch.

Harter Fell has small crags on top and all round, surely well looked over by every climber who takes a walk up there. The biggest one, named Demming Crag on the 2½-inch map, is a fine sweep of slab with a steeper left wing, and very soon after the School opened this was prospected for climbs suitable for novices. Straight up the middle a good Diff. route just under 200 feet long was found, and much later named Demming Slab, but elsewhere the climbing is harder and there is a lack of continuous lines. However, this one route, and smaller problems below and above, make a grand approach to Harter from the top of Hard Knott, as the more energetic members of several Eskdale Meets have found in recent years.

The credit for two new climbs (and more to be done) on Throstlehow Crag, up above the Throstle Garth bridge, must go to an unknown and unseen ewe. Joe Harrison of Brotherilkeld farm asked us to rescue her from this crag, which we had often seen but never looked at. There were no signs of a

cragfast sheep, but better things to attract a wandering eye on a fine spring day. First tried was a short crack which led, not too artificially, to a steep rib; and the Very Diff. climb, the first new route made by this particular pair of climbers, was called Simon's Rib, after a different kind of 'first' of theirs. The second attempt, up the middle of the crag, produced Throstle Buttress, mild Severe, with holds well hidden beneath the moss at first and a very fine pink slab at the top, steepening into a final wall. Both these climbs have been ascended for the second time, and fairly well cleaned of the more obvious vegetation and loose blocks. One other line, left of centre, has been prospected for a few feet, and filed for further investigation.

The latest crag to be discovered and climbed on lies high above Eskdale, under Slight Side, near the source of Cowcove Beck. High Scarth Crag was first noticed during walking expeditions with our boys, and when eventually visited by two of our best climbers, four good routes were found. There is variety here, something to interest the kitten as well as the tiger, well worth sampling and conveniently near the upper level route from Eskdale to Scafell.

Across the valley at much the same height, 1,400-1,500 feet, just under the top of Hard Knott itself (not the pass), stands Eskdale's challenge to the Napes: the Steeple, or Eskdale Needle. How many of you have seen it, let alone climbed it ? Yet it sticks prominently above the left-hand skyline as you walk homewards from the Throstle Garth bridge, just too high and too far away to tempt you aside from tea. Unlike the real Needle, the Steeple must be visited for itself, as there are no other climbs nearby and its one route, up from the neck, is only moderate. From its top, when you have examined the Scafells, look down and across at the wall of Heron Crag, let into the steep fellside, and make a resolve to go there. For Heron is a big crag as small crags go, and very similar in outline and steepness to its larger neighbour up the valley, Esk Buttress.

Up and down Eskdale are many other crags large and small; some explored; some pristine; some to keep you active and dry on days when bigger climbs are wet and cold (try Brantrake Crags on the roadside near Linbeck farm, north-west of Devoke Water, or Hollinghead Crag above Spout House

farm, mentioned already); some to catch your eye on a fine day with a promise of holds unheld and lines untraced. And whatever your choice, you climb in the precious atmosphere of an unspoilt, unfrequented valley, in peace.

HIGH SCARTH CRAG (M.R. 215040)

Where the track, which rises steeply at Cowcove Beck bridge beyond Taw House (and leads eventually to Cam Spout), crosses a small tributary at M.R. 214033 keep forward on a smaller track which leads below the crag in five to ten minutes. There is a steep clean buttress on the right, separated by a grassy gully from a central buttress with a large pinnacle-flake and distinctive overhangs. Farther left is the easy-angled Beginners' Ridge, and farther left still are more broken rocks offering mainly short problems. The climbs are described from right to left.

INTRODUCTORY SLABS — 85 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 8th February, 1959. D. Berry, I. M. Blake. Starts on the right of a shallow mossy gully which splits the first buttress about a third of its length in from the right-hand end.

(1) 65 feet. Climb slabs trending left to enter and climb a groove ascending right. Easier rocks to small flake belay or thread belay higher.

(2) 20 feet. Traverse left and slightly downwards then climb the steep nose to the top.

ROUTE 1 — 95 feet. Very severe. First ascent 1st December, 1957. O. R. D. Pritchard, A. J. Simpkin. Starts just to the left of the mossy gully.

(1) 45 feet. Ascend the steep short wall and continue right up sloping slabs. Spike belay.

(2) 25 feet. Up easy rocks leftwards to a good spike belay under a steep crack to the left of a smooth wall.

(3) 25 feet. Climb the crack by means of small holds. Strenuous.

ROUTE 2 — 90 feet. Severe. First ascent 1st December, 1957. A. J. Simpkin, O. R. D. Pritchard. Starts at a steep crack left of Route 1 and just to the right of a small cave.

(1) 20 feet. Climb the crack to a small belay.

(2) 45 feet. Climb the impending groove for 10 feet by bridging and continue for 30 feet on small holds to a ledge and belay. (Touches Route 1.)

(3) 25 feet. Immediately above the belay is an overhanging crack surmounted by a small oak tree. The crack is climbed by means of undercut holds (strenuous).

ROUTE 3 105 feet. Difficult. First ascent 5th August, 1957. A. J. Simpkin. Starts at the corner of the buttress to the left of a small holly tree.

(1) 65 feet. Climb the arête. At 40 feet ascend left, then step right and on to a sloping grassy ledge. Climb the groove above, to a ledge with a thread belay on the right (in a horizontal crack, thick rope only).

(2) 40 feet. The arête on the left, finishing up easier rock. Belay 20 feet higher.

COWCOVE RIB 90 feet. Difficult. First ascent, 8th February, 1959. D. Berry, J. C. Lagoe. Scramble up to the foot of a grey mossy rib on the right of the grassy gully separating the right-hand and central buttress.

(1) 30 feet. Climb the rib to a rock ledge, crevassed behind. Belay round ledge.

(2) 60 feet. From the right-hand end of the ledge climb the wall (mantelshelf) then move left and climb the rib. A steep detached slab may be climbed or avoided. Belay 20 feet higher on the left.

The grassy gully may easily be climbed. The rib in it is harder and more interesting.

FLAKE ROUTE 150 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 8th February, 1959. I. M. Blake, D. Berry. Starts at a small pinnacle at the right toe of the central buttress.

(1) 45 feet. Climb steep slabs trending right, turning the long overhangs on the right. Grassy slabs lead leftwards to a large ledge and belays.

(2) 40 feet. A slab, or a corner on the right, then step right and climb more easily to the top of the pinnacle-flake.

(3) 15 feet. Climb a steep crack, ending on steep unpleasant grass, or move left and swing up to reach the same grass. Ledge above with thread belay.

(4) 50 feet. Traverse right, along the ledge, to a steep wall. Climb this right then left to finish between two boulders. Belay on left.

BEGINNERS' RIDGE 175 feet. Moderate. First ascent 8th February, 1959. J. C. Lagoe, R. Whiting, C. Whiting. The easy-angled ridge left of the central buttress.

(1) 85 feet. A slab, then grassy ledges, then more easy rock to a belay on the right.

(2) 40 feet. The rocks on the right; large block belay on right just before the rock steepens.

(3) 50 feet. Climb the steeper section on the left, or climb above the belay moving right then left. Easier rocks to the top.

GATE CRAG

From Boot crossroads go down to the Parish Church, turn left along the river bank and in a quarter of a mile cross the river on one of the old railway bridge girders. Less well-balanced climbers go down to Boot School on the main road, turn left, cross the river by Dalegarth Bridge, immediately turn left again through the wood to cross Stanleygill Beck by a footbridge. The path continues eastwards passing near the girder bridge and then under Gate Crag.

TRIAL RIB 110 feet. Very Difficult. First ascent 19th July, 1951. W. F. Dowlen, W. G. Robinson. The climb follows the right edge of the obvious oblique buttress with a light grey left side.

(1) 60 feet. Start up the little nose, make a difficult swing round to the right at about 10 feet, then more easily up to the right-hand end of a grassy ledge.

Variation From 30 feet left of the original start follow an obvious line to the left-hand end of the grassy ledge. Easier than the other start.

(2) 50 feet. Climb just right of the edge to the top.

BOSIGRAN 135 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 9th October, 1955. S. Jervis, G. W. Morrall. Lies on the second ridge from the right-hand end of the crag (the first ridge has an intake wall running up to it). Starts at the foot of twin cracks divided by an overhang at 10 feet.

(1) 75 feet. Up the left-hand crack and over the overhang on reasonable holds. Move right, round a vertical corner, and make an ascending traverse to the right across a short slab (good handholds). Pull round the corner of the slab and climb the wall above for 20 feet to a small stance. No belay (two pitons used in opposing cracks).

(2) 60 feet. Traverse 5 feet left on poor heather ledge (good handholds above) then climb directly up the wall above. After an awkward move over a bulge a slab trending right is climbed on poor holds to the finish.

HERON CRAG

From Cowcove Beck bridge beyond Taw House take the Throstle Garth track. Just before this descends to the river, take a narrower track on the left which leads to the crag with impressive views of it. The first buttress reached has some broken climbing on it and is separated from the very steep main crag by a wide dirty gully which gives an easy but unpleasant climb.

HERON CORNER 110 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 15th June, 1955. J. C. Lagoe, W. F. Dowlen.

Starts 30 feet down from the corner of the wide bounding gully and runs up the less steep left edge of the crag. Small cairn at foot.

(1) 30 feet. Climb the wall, which overhangs slightly, and then up easy ledges into the grassy corner. Spike belay out on the right, rather awkward to reach.

(2) 25 feet. Up the slab on good small holds to a good ledge. Belay suitable for line only.

(3) 55 feet. Continue up the slab. Where it ends climb a short groove on the right then traverse right on a good (exposed) ledge round the corner to an easy groove leading to an excellent stance and block belays.

Variation Severe (original route). From the top of the short groove climb straight up the slight overhang. After a few more feet of rock the way off lies to the right up steep grass and heather.

BELLEROPHON 200 feet. Very severe. First ascent May, 1958. O. R. D. Pritchard, B. S. Schofield. Starts on the right-hand edge of the main nose of the crag, to the left of a square chimney.

(1) 40 feet. Climb directly up the arête on small rounded holds to grassy ledge and belay. (Original easy start. Climb the square chimney and step left to ledge and belay.)

(2) 40 feet. A delicate move right to the foot of a steep crack. Ascend the crack, difficult at first until the angle eases revealing a large grassy ledge. Belay.

(3) 35 feet. Climb the steep crack in the corner until it is possible to break out on the left wall to a small sloping stance with small thread belay under an overhang.

(4) 85 feet. Move round a nose to the right and work up the crack until good holds permit a strenuous pull-up, followed by easier climbing to a ledge. Finish directly up the overhanging crack on small holds, or escape to the left up a short wall.

BABYLON 200 feet. Hard severe. First ascent 18th September, 1955. R. E. Kendell, J. W. B. Barnes (alternate leads). The climb follows the steep tree-studded groove which bounds the main nose of the crag on its left. Starts directly below the groove.

(1) 25 feet. Climb up to a birch tree and past this into a small cave with a grassy terrace.

(2) 35 feet. Climb 10 feet up the left wall to a ledge, then re-enter the groove (awkward). Up past two holly bushes and an oak tree to a chockstone belay.

(3) 45 feet. Continue up the groove past a holly bush to a heathery ledge (piton belay low down in V-shaped depression).

(4) 55 feet. The angle eases slightly, but even so, this is perhaps the hardest pitch. Climb the groove to an oak, and beyond this to another. Thread belay.

(5) 40 feet. The last 20 feet of the groove landing on a terrace. A confronting rib gives a further 20 feet of climbing.

THROSTLEHOW CRAG

The crag lies at 1,200 feet, an hour's walk from Brotherilkeld, and faces south. It is the only crag of any size on the left bank of the Esk between the bridge below Throstle Garth and the river bend at point 1112. It is both marked and named on the 2½-in. map.

SIMON'S RIB 150 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 25th May, 1957. J. C. Lagoe, J. L. Lagoe. Starts at a crack which splits the obvious detached buttress at the right of the main crag.

(1) 30 feet. The steep wall on the right of the crack, with a good pull-out on to a ledge at 15 feet. Continue up the right of the crack, to a ledge with huge belay.

(2) 35 feet. Up to the left of the bulge above; cross a heather gully to a narrow rib; climb this to stance and small belay at its top.

(3) 30 feet. The wall above, on good holds, to good stance and belay at the foot of a steep rib. This rib forms the right edge of a large pinkish slab, which is a prominent feature of the crag.

(4) 55 feet. Delightful climbing up the steep rib, coming left on to the slab for the last few feet to the top.

THROSTLE BUTTRESS 160 feet. Mild severe. First ascent 25th May, 1957. J. C. Lagoe, J. L. Lagoe (alternate leads). Starts a few feet above an obvious detached boulder roughly in the centre of the foot of the crag.

(1) 50 feet. A little rib rises to the right to a sloping ledge. From the ledge climb up and left to a heather bay with a shaky flake at the back. A short slab on the right leads to a small stance on a sort of pinnacle, with good belay.

(2) 15 feet. From the belay, an exposed step up to the right, then straight up for a few feet to belay on left.

(3) 30 feet. Straight up as far as possible, then a short slab and mantelshelf on the right. From the mantelshelf ledge, good handholds permit a pull up and to the right into a grassy nook with belay on right.

(4) 15 feet. A short upward traverse to the right, then up a rib, the top of which is a good belay.

(5) 50 feet. Climb on to the slab above, traverse upwards to the left above a small oak, then straight up to a ledge overhung at its left end. Traverse right a few feet, then straight up the steep final wall which has good finishing holds.

DEMMING CRAG, HARTER FELL

This crag, a broad sweep of slabs, is named on the 2½-in. map, and lies between the summits of Hard Knott Pass and Harter Fell at about 1,500 feet.

DEMMING SLAB 195 feet. Difficult. First known ascent 1950. V. Veevers, J. W. Tucker. Starts at the toe of the crag.

(1) 60 feet. Straight up the easy-angled slab to a grassy stance in a small groove below and to the right of a bulge. Moderate belay suitable for line only.

(2) 35 feet. Straight up above the belay then left along a grass ledge to two small belays at its left end.

(3) 40 feet. Up the groove above (awkward in wet weather) then grassy ledges slightly right to the foot of a prominent rib. Belay.

(4) 35 feet. The very pleasant rib, ending on a large grassy terrace. Walk up and to the left to a cairn at the foot of a wall.

(5) 25 feet. Climb the wall using twin cracks and a superb letterbox handhold.

NOTE.

Descriptions of Heron Corner and Babylon (Heron Crag), Simon's Rib and Throstle Buttress (Throstlehow Crag), and Demming Slab (Harter Fell) appear in *Journal* No. 51, 1957 (*Climbs Old and New*) but are repeated here for convenience.

A further Eskdale climb (South Buttress on Yew Crag) will be found in this number in *Climbs Old and New* (page 297).

BORROWDALE

Peter Moffat

BLACK CRAG

THE SHROUD 240 feet. Very severe. First ascent 1st June, 1958. P.R., P. Lockey. Starts up the extreme left-hand end of the crag at an obvious steep groove.

(1) 40 feet. Climb the groove direct to a small heather stance and spike belay.

(2) 50 feet. Pitch 2 of the Girdle. Climb directly up above belay, then up to the left until stopped by a bulge, which is climbed by a swing out right then straight up a steep wall to piton belay under the large overhang.

(3) 70 feet. Traverse left for about 25 feet, then straight up over a small overhang. Climb steep awkward rock up right, to another small overhang. This is ascended on the left. Climb the short groove above then step left on to a grass ledge. Piton belay.

(4) 80 feet. Move on to a small rib on the right, then climb up a series of small slabs and grooves towards bulging rock up on the right. When this is reached move right. Easier climbing leads to the top.

VERTIGO 250 feet. Very severe. First ascent 18th October, 1958. P.R., B. Aughton. Starts below the centre of the line of overhangs on the left-hand buttress.

(1) 40 feet. Scramble up the grassy gangway and wet ledges to the yew tree below a vertical wall.

(2) 50 feet. A small break slightly to the left of the tree is climbed directly to the slab traverse of the Girdle. Piton belay below the large overhang on the left.

(3) 35 feet. Three pitons. Traverse back right for about 15 feet to the obvious break in the overhang. A mantelshelf brings one to the actual overhang (protection piton in place). One channel piton is used to bring in reach the last two pitons (in place). Move right to a small stance on the lip of the overhang (piton belay).

(4) 25 feet. Four pitons (last one in place) are used for the first few feet of the vertical wall above. Then move left to small stance on easier rock (piton belay).

(5) 100 feet. A steep little rib on the right—continue up this to heather ledge. Traverse to the right of this and up another small rib, then straight up to the summit.

GOWDER CRAG

THE HOG'S BACK 130 feet. Very severe. First ascent Easter,
SLAB START 1958. J. A. Austin, Miss J. M. Ruffe.

(1) 90 feet. Climb the short rib 15 feet to the right of the arrow on the right-hand side of the ridge. From the top of the

rib climb the delicate slab in front until it is possible to move left into a prominent wide crack. From the top of the crack make a semi-hand-traverse to the right to a tree belay and stance.

(2) 40 feet. Up the rib on the left until a narrow ledge leads left to the ridge. Step round the corner (junction with Hog's Back).

SHEPHERD'S CRAG

ENTERTAINMENT TRAVERSE — 60 feet. Very severe. First ascent 7th June, 1958. P.R., P. Lockey. Starts at the saddle of Little Chamonix.

Move left for 20 feet until stopped by an overhanging rib. A sling on a spike, and an étrier, enable one to reach a diagonal crack which slants down left to an overhanging niche just right of the large spike. Jam the crack, then swing round the pinnacle. Climb the crack above the overhang.

WALLA CRAG

OBSESSION — 130 feet. Very severe. First ascent 23rd August, 1958. P.R., B. Aughton. Starts 30 feet left of Walla Crag Gully above 40 feet of scrambling.

(1) 50 feet. Starts behind an oak tree which is about 30 feet below some bulging rocks. Climb small steep gangways slanting up left to an easy traverse left into the centre of the face. Small stance—piton belay. Junction with White Buttress.

(2) 80 feet. A bulge above and slightly left of the belay is climbed in the direction of some broken cracks. Move left, after the bulge is surmounted, to a good flake; then straight up steep rock to a short grass gangway which leads to the summit.

BUTTERMERE

EAGLE CRAG, BIRKNESS COOMBE

EAGLE FRONT VARIATION — Very severe. First ascent 24th July, 1955. D.W.E., B. Carruthers.

(1) From the beginning of pitch 4 of Eagle Front, traverse left for 50 feet, then climb up a delicate slab to a small stance and poor belay.

(2) The groove above is difficult to enter, with poor holds for 15 feet. Easier climbing leads to the small flake belay on pitch 6 of Eagle Front.

LING CRAG

Ling Crag is situated by the side of Crummock Water and is marked on the O.S. and Bartholomew's one-inch maps.

NEETA 175 feet. Very severe and strenuous. Leader needs 100 feet of rope. First ascent 2nd November, 1958. R. McHaffie, J. Douglas. The climb lies at the northern end of the crag and is marked by a cross on the rock and a cairn.

(1) 35 feet. Traverse left from the cairn for 10 feet, then climb direct to the overhang; a very awkward traverse to the right is made to a grass ledge. Piton belay.

(2) 40 feet. The crux. An upward traverse right for 15 feet is made using the sloping crack. Climb the overhanging wall until an awkward step left is made. Grass ledge. Spike belay.

(3) 100 feet. Walk to the left of the perched block, then ascend the slabs to the top. Poor belay.

INVINCIBLE 130 feet. Very severe and strenuous. The second pitch needs five pitons and a set of étriers. First ascent 23rd November, 1958. R. McHaffie, J. Douglas. The climb starts about 35 yards to the right of Neeta.

(1) 35 feet. The overhanging wall is climbed on good holds; strong fingers essential for this pitch. Grass ledge, spike belay.

(2) 40 feet. This pitch is strenuous. From the grass ledge traverse left until an overhang in a groove is reached; the overhang is climbed with the aid of a piton in the vertical crack above the overhang. Two more pitons are inserted in the crack and a horizontal crack running to the left can be gained. This horizontal crack on the left wall is climbed with the aid of four pitons, two of which are in place; the pitch finishes on a grass ledge. Tree belay.

(3) 55 feet. From the tree a delightful upward traverse left is made on small holds for 20 feet; climb round the corner on to the slab, then climb to the top. Piton belay.

DILEMMA GROOVE 110 feet. Very severe and very strenuous. First ascent 14th December, 1958. R. McHaffie, J. Douglas. Starts 20 feet to the right of Invincible up a broad crack. The second pitch requires three horizontal pitons, two channel pitons and a set of étriers; two pitons are in place.

(1) 35 feet. The crack is climbed until a traverse left can be made for 5 feet. Then climb direct to the broad grass ledge. Spike belay.

(2) 75 feet. Climb the small pedestal on the right; a piton can be inserted in the forbidding-looking groove above. Progress

can be made up the groove by using the crack in the corner until a grass ledge is reached. Broken rocks to the top. Spike belay.

CEMBER SLAB 150 feet. Severe. First ascent 14th December, 1958. J. Douglas, R. McHaffie. Starts at the northern end of the crag, at the lowest point of the slab, at a prominent crack. Leader needs 105 feet of rope.

(1) 50 feet. The slab is climbed on delicate holds until a shallow groove is reached; this is climbed direct. Belay on a flake above the groove.

(2) 100 feet. The slab behind the flake is climbed until a bulge on the left can be seen; a traverse is made to the bulge. This is climbed on good holds. Above this a crack is ascended to a grass ledge; the slab above is climbed to the top. Spike belay.

QUANTRAL 125 feet. Very severe. First ascent 4th January, 1959. R. McHaffie, J. Douglas. The climb starts 10 feet to the right of a pedestal which is 20 feet to the right of Neeta.

(1) 50 feet. Climb the steep gangway on delicate holds until a grass ledge is reached; about 15 feet above, another grass ledge can be gained. Spike belay.

(2) 20 feet. The groove to the right of the prominent overhang is climbed on fairly good but infrequent holds. Tree belay.

(3) 55 feet. Third pitch of Invincible.

ENNERDALE

GABLE CRAG

CORKSCREW SLABS 180 feet. Severe. First ascent 15th June, 1958. J.W., A.H.G. (alternate leads), A.E.W. Starts opposite the foot of the bottle-shaped pinnacle to the right of Oblique Chimney (good rock—poor belays).

(1) 60 feet. Diagonally right up easy rocks for 20 feet then up to a small ledge with several loose blocks. The crack above is climbed to a ledge with small belay.

(2) 60 feet. Traverse left to a groove which is climbed for 15 feet. Traverse right across a groove and ascend slabs, diagonally right, to a small stance on the edge of the slab. Piton belay.

(3) 60 feet. Traverse a few feet left to a small ledge below a bulge which is passed on the right. Steep but easier climbing to a monumental belay at the top of the crag.

SLEDGATE RIDGE 240 feet. Severe. First ascent 15th June, 1958. J.W., A.H.G. (alternate leads), A.E.W. Starts from the path under Gable Crag below and to the left of Engineer's Chimney and finishes to the left and opposite the bottom of Engineer's Slabs.

(1) 20 feet. A difficult crack up the wall which can be avoided by the chimney on the right.
(2) 50 feet. A water-worn groove on the right for 30 feet, then the wall on the left to a large ledge.
(3) 60 feet. From the left end of the ledge step up the wall and ascend the slabs, first diagonally right, then straight up to a large grass platform.
(4) 50 feet. The wall above is climbed in the centre to a ledge and belay.
(5) 60 feet. The wall continues and is climbed by the middle of three cracks.

MOONSHINER 130 feet. Severe. First ascent 5th July, 1958. J.W., J.U. (alternate leads). Starts about 150 feet above the finish of Sledgate Ridge, about 20 feet to the left of a large block, and runs up the steep wall between Oblique Chimney and Engineer's Chimney.
(1) 50 feet. Straight up a rib to a grass ledge with belay on the left.
(2) 40 feet. The rib above is attained from the right and ascended directly to a small grass ledge and belay below a steep crack.
(3) 40 feet. Step left to a grass tuft, then work back right towards the crack and stright up to the top.

SUNDOWNER 165 feet. Severe. First ascent 5th July, 1958. J.W., R.S.K. (alternate leads), J.U. Starts at the same level as Prayer Mat Buttress below a steep prominent slab with a chimney on its right, and runs up the buttress to the left of the scree gully which separates Prayer Mat Buttress from the rest of the crag.
(1) 55 feet. From the left-hand end of the slab climb up to a grassy groove which splits the slab diagonally. Ascend the groove to the right, step across the top of the chimney and up to a large grass ledge below a repulsive-looking crack. Belay.
(2) 40 feet. Make an ascending traverse left round a corner and climb directly up to a grass ledge with a good belay.
(3) 40 feet. The slab above leads to a rake trending left. Leave the rake on the right, and ascend to a corner below an open chimney. Belay.
(4) 30 feet. Climb the corner by cracks. Exit on the right.

ENGINEER'S SLABS 70 feet. Very severe. First ascent 14th June, UNFINISHED ARÊTE 1958. P.R., P. Lockey.

DIRECT FINISH Pitch 2. The insecure blocks have been removed from the crack on the left. Climb this crack until stopped by an overhang. Ascend this on the right where another overhang is climbed on the right. Up a small rib to summit.

HIGH STILE—ENNERDALE FACE

ELVINA'S SLAB 110 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 17th November, 1957. D. N. Greenop, J. P. Greenop, G. Benn. A narrow but obvious scree gully marks the western end of the crag. The climb starts in a large grassy corner on the right wall, about 30 feet up the scree.

(1) 35 feet. Awkward climbing up the left edge of the wall which overlooks the gully. Ledge and belay below some large blocks.

(2) 40 feet. Above the blocks is a steep slabby face which adjoins a prominent long crack over to the right. Mount the blocks and make an ascending traverse on small holds across the slab to a chockstone belay about half-way up the crack.

(3) 20 feet. The crack soon widens to an easy chimney.

(4) 15 feet. A short wet groove to the right.

TRIPARTITE 100 feet. Moderate. First ascent 17th November, 1957. D. N. Greenop, J. P. Greenop, G. Benn. Starts at the lowest point of the slabs at the Gillerthwaite end of the crag, a short distance below Elvina's Slab.

(1) 35 feet. The slabs to a small cave at the top of an easy chimney. Belays.

(2) 25 feet. Move right to a crevasse and climb a short chockstone chimney to a scree rake. Cross this to the foot of a short sharp rib on the ridge ahead.

(3) 40 feet. Small holds for 6 feet then right to an overhang which is climbed. Follow the ridge.

COUNTERFORT 120 feet. Difficult. First ascent 17th November, 1957. D. N. Greenop, G. Benn, J. P. Greenop. About 100 feet down to the left of the Spearhead is a small subsidiary buttress leading to the main crag. The climb starts below a crack in a grassy corner at the lowest point of the buttress.

(1) 20 feet. A steep rib to the right of the crack. Ledge and block belay below a small cave with an overhanging roof.

(2) 20 feet. A strenuous effort is required to surmount the overhang on the right. 20 feet of scrambling leads to a junction with the start of Chrysalis Arête.

(3) 80 feet. The slab, followed by a shallow chimney on the right and easier climbing to a large block belay.

SECOND FORM CHIMNEYS 125 feet. Difficult. First ascent 14th April, 1958. D. N. Greenop, P. Todd, V. Lamb, J. Todhunter. Starts past Butterfly Crack, a few feet above the right corner of the buttress in a grassy bay at the foot of some steep slabs.

(1) 20 feet. Climb the slab moving right to a stance below a small cave.

(2) 20 feet. Enter the cave, then traverse right to a shallow chimney. Spike belay overlooking the gully.
(3) 25 feet. The chimney. An awkward exit is then made on the left to a boulder-strewn corner. Belay.
(4) 15 feet. Another chimney to another corner.
(5) 15 feet. A broken wall.
(6) 30 feet. Cross the heather platform and climb the chimney ahead.

THE BROKEN HAFT 135 feet. Difficult. First ascent 14th April, 1958. D. N. Greenop, P. Todd, V. Lamb, J. Todhunter. Starts directly behind the Spearhead.
(1) 25 feet. Work left, then up a steep buttress to a ledge and large belay.
(2) 20 feet. Up for 10 feet, then traverse right to small niche and belay.
(3) 30 feet. The groove above to some chockstones. Stand on these before traversing right to a small grassy corner abutting the left wall of the main buttress. Block belay.
(4) 25 feet. Step up to the left a little, then traverse left over lichen-covered rocks to a stance and spike belay below a crack.
(5) 10 feet. The crack leads to a notch on the arête. Block belay.
(6) 25 feet. The steep rough buttress behind the belay.

JENKS 100 feet. Moderate. First ascent 19th May, 1958. D. N. Greenop, G. Benn. Starts a few feet to the right of the Broken Haft at a chimney bounding the left wall of the buttress.
(1) 25 feet. The rib to the left of the chimney.
(2) 25 feet. Continue to a grassy corner.
(3) 50 feet. Up to the left for 10 feet, then climb the slabs above via a broken crack. Finish up a short corner.

BOULDER AND CRACK CLIMB 110 feet. Very difficult. First ascent 19th May, 1958. D. N. Greenop, G. Benn. The crags containing Eighty-foot Slab Buttress are bounded at the eastern end by a huge boulder leaning against the face. Starts from the boulder.
(1) 25 feet. Climb the rocks to the left of the boulder to its top.
(2) 10 feet. A steep slab.
(3) 25 feet. Climb the chimney on the right to a grassy corner and block belay.
(4) 50 feet. Easy climbing for 10 feet, then with difficulty up the long narrow crack above the slabs.

ESKDALE

YEW CRAG

SOUTH BUTTRESS 180 feet. Severe. First ascent 6th April, 1958. D. Bentley, S.C., E.V.F.

(1) 25 feet. Up a slab trending right, then left on to a nose which is followed to a grass ledge and belay.

(2) 25 feet. The crack left of the deep chimney leads on to the front of the rib which is followed to a grass ledge.

(3) 15 feet. Walk along the ledge left for 40 feet until the wall above (15 feet) can be climbed to a prominent pinnacle.

(4) 85 feet. The overhanging corner above the pinnacle leads to a groove running diagonally left which is followed to a stance overlooking the gully on the left.

(5) 30 feet. The easy rock ridge above.

LANGDALE

PAVEY ARK

BY-PASS CLIMB 180 feet. Very severe. First ascent 1st June, 1958. J. A. Austin, Miss J. M. Ruffe. Starts up the obvious groove to the right of Rake End Wall.

(1) 85 feet. The groove is guarded by a short blank wall. Climb this about 4 feet right of the little corner, then up the slabby bed of the groove until it steepens. After about 6 feet step left to the rib and climb easily to the belay at the top of pitch 1 of Rake End Wall.

(2) 30 feet. Make an awkward traverse right, under the overhang, and climb up the shallow groove in front to the belay at the top of pitch 2 of Rake End Wall.

(3) 65 feet. Climb up the wall (awkward) on large holds, trending left to the rib. The next few moves require gardening so step across and down to a junction with Rake End Wall. Swing round the rib and up to the belay.

THE ARÊTE PITCH 120 feet. Very severe. First ascent June, 1958. J. A. Austin, Miss J. M. Ruffe.

From the top of pitch 4 of Rake End Chimney walk up the gully about 15 feet and take the obvious traversing line up and left across the wall to the ridge. Climb the arête passing a bulge at about 60 feet on the right.

RAVEN CRAG

ODIN 140 feet. Very severe. First ascent 1958. G. Oliver, F. Carroll, P.R., A. Campbell.

Starts at the left-hand end of Raven Crag Buttress 10 feet left of Evening Wall.

(1) 70 feet. Climb the dirty groove for 20 feet, step left and climb the overhang. Continue straight ahead to the tree belay on Evening Wall.

(2) 70 feet. Descend about 6 feet and traverse right for 20 feet to the foot of a break in the overhang which is climbed. Continue up the groove taking the right-hand branch.

DWAG — 115 feet. Very severe. First ascent 23rd November, 1958. D. W. G. Adams, R. G. Marshall. Starts on a large pointed rock in a deep chimney to the left of a block. Left of Stewpot.

(1) 30 feet. Climb the chimney, then mantelshelf on the right, then easy-angled crack to belay.
(2) 35 feet. Climb steep rib. Block belay.
(3) 10 feet. Step down left, then up to earthy ledge. Belay.
(4) 40 feet. Traverse diagonally left to crest of a rib. Runner on a spike, then mantelshelf on to spike. Climb scoop to top. Belay.

SWINE KNOTT

SWINE KNOTT CHIMNEY — 110 feet. Very severe. First ascent July, 1958. A. L. Atkinson, R. Warner, H. Middleton. Starts up the chimney to the right of the pillar 10 feet left of a horizontal ash tree.

(1) 15 feet. Climb broken rock to the terrace. Ash tree belay.
(2) 45 feet. Climb the wall a few feet to the right of the tree, gain a ledge and step left into the chimney. Climb the chimney to a good tree belay.
(3) 50 feet. Climb the overhang behind the tree and continue up an open groove to the top.

SWINE KNOTT BUTTRESS — 100 feet. Very severe. First ascent 5th July, 1958. R. Warner, A. L. Atkinson, P. Turnbull, H. Middleton. Starts near the right-hand end of the crag a few feet to the right of the nose of the buttress. There is a yew tree 20 feet up to the right.

100 feet. From the nose step right and climb the steep wall to a small ledge. Step round the corner on the left and climb straight up the wall a few feet to the left of the arête. A small sloping flake is reached and after an upward step a move right is made on to a small sloping ledge on the arête. Follow the arête to the top.

SLANTING GROOVES — 90 feet. Severe. First ascent July, 1958. D. B. Jack. Starts on the terrace at the foot of a thin crack slanting to the right some 20 feet right of the chimney.

(1) 25 feet. Climb straight up for 15 feet when a traverse left is made to a stance and belay on a large detached flake.
(2) 65 feet. Step right and climb up to the foot of a crack slanting up to the right. Climb the crack to a large perched block and traverse left to a small corner which is climbed to the top.

THE GIRDLE TRAVERSE 210 feet. Very severe. First ascent 19th July, 1958. A. L. Atkinson, R. Warner (alternate leads). Starts from a sloping rock ledge at the left-hand edge of the crag.

(1) 20 feet. Traverse right over broken rocks under the large triangular overhangs to the terrace below an open chimney. This is the chimney on the left of the pillar.

(2) 45 feet. Climb the corner on the left until a step right can be made to a grass ledge in the V chimney. Flake for runner. After a layback move continue on small holds to a good tree belay at the top of the V chimney.

(3) 20 feet. From the tree step up and traverse right, under the edge of the forest, when a short descent leads to the tree belay at the top of pitch 2 of Swine Knott Chimney.

(4) 75 feet. Traverse right, round a corner, and along small ledges to the foot of the crack on Slanting Grooves. Runner in the crack. Traverse horizontally right on undercut flakes and small footholds until a step up can be made to a small sloping ledge on the arête. Step down and round the corner over an open groove to a sloping rock ledge, then right to a grass ledge. Poor belay.

(5) 50 feet. Climb the corner for a few feet, when a sloping ledge enables a traverse right to be made for a few feet. Step down and traverse right on small footholds until a good hold can be reached and a move made to a small ledge on the arête on the right. Climb the arête to the top.

SCOUT CRAG

SALMON LEAP 110 feet. Very severe. First ascent July, 1958. A.H.G., M. Thompson. Starts 100 yards right of the top of Route 1 at a belt of black wet slabs.

(1) 15 feet. Slabs to a ledge.

(2) 30 feet. Slabs to a ledge below an overhang.

(3) 45 feet. Traverse left below the overhang and climb the slabs to ledge.

(4) 20 feet. Climb the bulging broken rock above.

NEWLANDS

RED CRAG

PEEL CLIMB 80 feet. Severe. First ascent Easter, 1958. J. A. Austin, R. B. Evans, Miss J. M. Ruffe, W. Newton. Starts about 30 feet right of October Wall.

Traverse right, across a slab beneath the overhang, until a short bulging crack enables the overhang to be crossed. Up to the second overhang, then make a short traverse right into a shallow groove to the top.

THIRLMERE

CASTLE CRAG

Seen from Steel End Farm near the foot of Dunmail Raise, the crag appears in profile as an isolated ridge on the northern slopes of the valley containing Wythburn Beck. Half an hour's walk up the valley brings one to the crag which is divided by a wide slabby gully containing an ash tree.

THE CRYPT AND FINGERS CLIMB — 235 feet. Difficult. First ascent 14th September, 1958. D. N. Greenop, J. P. Greenop. Starts at the broad base of the left-hand buttress which contains a curious well-marked triangular niche 40 feet up.

(1) 40 feet. A groove leads first to a slab and then to a block belay below the apex-roofed crypt.
(2) 30 feet. Traverse left out of the crypt round the edge of the buttress and up a grassy groove. Belays.
(3) 35 feet. Up easily, then left and regain the main buttress by a wide slab on the right. Jammed block belay.
(4) 50 feet. Easy blocks, a short chimney, then a steep rib to a block belay.
(5) 35 feet. Cross the grassy gully on the left and climb a short wall. Belay.
(6) 10 feet. Descend left to the foot of the two fingers.
(7) 35 feet. Squeeze through the cleft and ascend from the inside until it is possible to climb outside the larger obelisk to its top. A long step across the cleft leads to the finish.

SISTERS RIDGE — 145 feet. Difficult. First ascent 14th September, 1958. D. N. Greenop, J. P. Greenop. Starts 5 yards to the right of the lowest point of the right-hand buttress.

(1) 40 feet. Climb the steep slab behind the detached block. Move right and continue up the edge of the slab. Belay.
(2) 20 feet. Step up to the left on to the main ridge and climb a gangway to a small crevasse. Belays.
(3) 45 feet. A short chimney, then a return right to the ridge. Spike belay.
(4) 40 feet. The ridge steepens and becomes more open. Block belay.

WASDALE

SCAFELL EAST BUTTRESS

CHARTREUSE — 180 feet. Very severe. First ascent 3rd May, 1958. R. Smith, D. Leaver.

(1) 90 feet. Climb the first few feet of Mickledore Chimney until it is possible to traverse delicately to reach a line of small flake holds which lead directly to the ledge at the top of pitch 2 of Mickledore Grooves.

(2) 90 feet. Climb the rib above directly over a bulge to a deep crack. Finish up the crack and corner above.

LEVERAGE 180 feet. Very severe. First ascent 3rd May, 1958. R. Smith, D. Leaver. The original start to Mickledore Grooves is crossed at 15 feet by a shallow line of cracks.

Climb this line over various bulges until it falls back into a slabby corner. 90 feet. Work up and right on to a higher slab. Reversing the start of pitch 5 of East Buttress Girdle, climb the corner above to a small square roof and use the undercut crack to traverse right and round it and so to a broken wall and the top.

THE SCREES. LOW ADAM CRAG

The crag lies between the two biggest scree fans. Approach as for the Screes gullies. A big gully splits the right-hand side of the crag.

ADRENALIN 210 feet. Very severe. First ascent 23rd November, 1958. R. Shaw, I. Clough (alternate leads). Takes the easiest line up the buttress on the left of the big gully. Starts at large block belay. Cairn.

(1) 30 feet. A short wall on the left is climbed to a crack which leads to a stance with belay on the left.

(2) 35 feet. The rib above the belay is climbed to a ledge at 15 feet. Traverse left and descend slightly below a large poised block to a small stance. Piton needed for belay, or continue to pitch 3.

(3) 30 feet. A rising traverse left to gain with difficulty a ledge with a holly bush. Small running belay. 15 feet of awkward and exposed climbing to a stance and belays.

(4a) 35 feet. Move right and swing into a crack. Running belays. Climb the crack then slabs to a grassy ledge and small belay below a wall.

(4b) 30 feet. *Alternatively*, climb the groove above the belays at the top of pitch 3 and make a delicate exit on to the slab on the right. Continue to grassy ledge and small belay below a wall.

(5) 80 feet. Traverse right and slightly downwards for 15 feet, then climb the crack line above, difficult at first. Running belay. Make for the right-hand edge of the buttress, then climb back left to a ledge and belay.

Scrambling for 100 feet leads to the summit of the buttress near the top of the big gully. The easiest way off is up a further 100 feet, then right over heather slopes.

KEY TO INITIALS

S. Clough	A. H. Greenbank	J. Umpleby
D. W. English	R. S. Knight	J. Wilkinson
E. V. Flint	P. Ross	A. E. Wormell

IN MEMORIAM

LESLIE WILLIAM SOMERVELL, 1919-1958

We were sitting in the smoking-room of the Kinlochewe Hotel after dinner on Sunday, 11th May, 1958, when Howard Somervell came in and told us that his brother Leslie had died that day following an operation a few days earlier. Not very much was said, but most of those present who had known Leslie for a long time and had been with him on many Scottish Meets felt very sad that he would come with us no more.

Leslie joined the Club soon after his war service ended in 1919. He was an enthusiastic member and became the obvious choice for the post of Honorary Secretary when J. B. Wilton vacated it in 1922. It was during his four years of office that the negotiations for the 1914-1918 War Memorial were concluded and the tablet on Great Gable unveiled in 1924. In 1925 he married a fellow member, Betty de Fonblanque. The post of Honorary Secretary was now taken over by J. C. Appleyard and Leslie became a Vice-President (1927-1929). This was followed by several periods of service as a member of the committee until, in 1946, he was elected President.

In 1944 the Club leased Raw Head Farm from Mr. Bulman for a minimum period of seven and a half years, but it soon became apparent that the resources of the Cottage were insufficient and the question of providing additional accommodation by alterations to the Barn was put forward. A strong subcommittee, with Leslie as Chairman, was elected to carry out the work. The alterations were difficult enough, even without all the war-time restrictions on building that had to be overcome, and, in addition, there were strong divergences of opinion as to the best way of doing them. It speaks volumes for Leslie's tact and patience that the work was finally brought to a harmonious conclusion, and he himself had the pleasure of opening the Barn officially on the 8th April, 1950. There was, however, to be no rest for him in his capacity of Chairman of the Huts Subcommittee. News was received that some buildings were for sale at Buttermere and on August Bank Holiday that year Leslie and some of the Club's officials were viewing the stables, barn and cottage at Birkness (or Hassness as it was then called). Leslie was very enthusiastic about Birkness; the property was eventually purchased and the programme was once more work, work

and more work until in due course the new hut was opened at Whitsuntide, 1952. Hard on this came the chance of acquiring a hut in Borrowdale—the Salving House at Rosthwaite—and again the property was bought. Specifications, estimates, contractors, working parties: Leslie and the Huts Sub-committee took them all in their stride and our fourth hut was ready for opening at the Whit Meet, 1953.

I have been through the files that Leslie kept of all the work done at the three huts. They are a wonderful record of his patience and perseverence and his deep insight into the needs of the huts, both for the present and future development. He was without doubt the ideal man for the job. As Chairman he could have taken the practical work a little more easily but that was not his way. It became proverbial that when he was wanted one looked for him where the work was either the dirtiest or the hardest—he was sure to be in the middle of it all! He never spared himself and had no time for anyone who sat back and watched others at work.

Leslie was a most valuable man to have on a committee. He weighed matters up slowly and with deliberation and when he spoke it was usually very much to the point. He never let himself be swayed by personal motives but thought only of what he considered best for the Club, for whose good name he was very jealous.

His one enemy was his health and he underwent several major operations. Many would have given up climbing, but he won through time after time and was back on his beloved fells as soon as it was possible. Technically he was a very fine rock climber but prolonged spells of ill-health prevented him from coming into the front rank. He climbed a good deal however, between the wars, both at home and abroad. In Scotland he and his brother made a first ascent of the Western Buttress of Cul Beag in Wester Ross. Leslie went regularly to the Alps and the Dolomites and also climbed in the Tatra Mountains with Bentley Beetham. One memorable holiday was spent in the Dolomites with his brother and F. S. Smythe. It seems that when things became at all difficult, Leslie was bullied into taking the lead and with his spare build and great muscular strength he usually succeeded where the others had failed! In the years following World War II he attended the Club Meets at Arolla and Zermatt and it was during the ascent of the Rimpfischhorn

at the latter meet that the fingers of his right hand became severely frostbitten; later, the little finger and the top joint of the third finger were both amputated. This restricted his climbing but did not prevent him ski-ing. He was an expert at this sport and continued to go abroad each year with his family to one or other of the winter sports centres.

To think of Leslie is also to think of motoring. In the early days he was an enthusiastic motor-cyclist but later changed to a car. He had a wonderful knowledge of the Lakeland roads and knew to a minute how long it would take him to go from his home near Kendal to any place you cared to mention. He was a fast driver and yet a very safe one. During the Suez crisis he bought a Lambretta in order to conserve his car petrol ration. It will be remembered that owing to petrol restrictions arrangements were made for transport to the 1957 Scottish Meet at Ullapool by bus; Leslie intended to take the scooter with him but when the time came it was found that it could not be got aboard. Someone light-heartedly suggested riding it there and Leslie immediately took up the challenge; he rode it to Bridge of Allan, our over-night stopping place, and what is more got there first! Quite a feat at any time and he was then over sixty. The scooter was sent on by train to Inverness and then ridden to Ullapool; he also rode it all the way back to Kendal at the end of the meet.

Leslie's most outstanding quality was perhaps his thoughtful kindness and most of his friends can recall instances of this, particularly those that were so unexpected that the recipient had never even considered their possibility! He rarely gave a lift to a hiker who 'thumbed' him but many a walker tramping along with a loaded rucksack must have blessed the motorist who pulled up alongside and asked if he would like a lift.

In business Leslie was a Director of Somervell Brothers Ltd. and it was considered that there were few who could equal his knowledge of the manufacture of shoes. He was loved and respected in the factory and at the Memorial Service held in Zion Chapel, Kendal, the building was packed with men and women from the works.

His life was a very full one. In addition to his work for our Club, he was intensely interested in the work of the Y.M.C.A., and was President of both the Kendal Branch and

the North-Western Division. In 1954 he was awarded the Gold Order of the Red Triangle for his forty years of devoted service. He also served as a Justice of the Peace for over twenty years besides being connected in one capacity or another with many other Kendal organizations. The keynote of Leslie's life was service and it can be well and truly said of him that he loved his fellow men.

R. G. PLINT.

GEOFFREY WINTHROP YOUNG, 1919-1958

By the death of Geoffrey Winthrop Young on 6th September, 1958, the Club has lost one of its most distinguished honorary members. The second son of Sir George and Dame Alice Eacy Young, he was born in 1876 and spent a happy boyhood at Formosa, an island home on the Thames near Cliveden, where many of the literary and artistic men and women of the period found and enjoyed hospitality. He went to Marlborough and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he inaugurated the nocturnal sport of roof climbing. The completion of his education at Jena and Geneva left him an accomplished linguist. He became an assistant master at Eton and later an inspector of secondary schools. In 1913 he temporarily abandoned his educational interests to devote himself to literature, in which he later gained an honorary doctorate. From 1925 for seven years he was consultant for Europe in the humanities for the Rockefeller Trust and in 1932 was appointed Thomas Wall Reader in Comparative Education at London University, a post which he held until his retirement in 1941. He was always interested in education and his influence was largely instrumental in the founding of Gordonstoun and the Outward Bound schools on the Kurt Hahn principles, which were then very much of an innovation in this country.

Young's first great climbing period ended in 1914. For a dozen seasons or so he had ranged the Alps, repeating the classic routes and adding new ones and variations of his own. It was a time when most of our countrymen and their guides with a few exceptions (V. J. E. Ryan was one) were content to follow well-known ways. For the most part, British Alpine talent was lying dormant. He and his friends quickly brought it to life again by an impressive series of expeditions, first guideless, as when with George Mallory and Donald

Robertson the first ascent of the south-east ridge of the Nesthorn was made; but his climbing soon adopted the more usual guided pattern and in Joseph Knubel he found the perfect 'fellow-traveller,' a title not then debased by the lower standards of a later age. The enthusiastic and gifted amateur and the superb technician formed one of the most famous of climbing partnerships: each seemed to complement the other's qualities. Together, they climbed the Isolée of the Dames Anglaises for the first time, made a new route up the east face of the Weisshorn, and another on the same mountain from the Zinal side. They made the first ascent of the east face of the Zinal Rothorn, and the Younggrat of the Zermatt Breithorn. For the south face of the Täschhorn they were joined by Ryan and the Lochmatter brothers. Either party might well have failed alone: together, they were invincible, and the account of this climb is one of the most graphic stories of mountain adventure. H. O. Jones joined him for his great season of 1911 when he traversed the Jorasses from the Col des Grandes Jorasses with the first descent to the Col des Hirondelles, made the first complete ascent of the Brouillard Ridge from the Col Emile Rey, this time with Dr. Karl Blodig in the party; then with Knubel, Todhunter, and Henri Brocherel forced a direct line up the great wall of the Mer de Glace side of the Grépon. Though the route now followed is an easier one and the hut by the Tour Rouge has removed much of the labour, few modern climbers will fail to be impressed by the steep, russet defences of the upper bastion culminating in the Knubel Crack. His last new climb was in 1914, still with Knubel and joined by Siegfried Herford and Hans Brantschen; together they climbed the Gspaltenhorn by the difficult ridge of the Red Teeth.

The war came and took men to grimmer work. For a month or two he was a war correspondent but soon felt compelled to play a more active and direct part and joined the Friends' Ambulance Unit, which he commanded at Ypres from October 1914 to July 1915, and acted as liaison officer to the civil population for the Eighth French and Second British Armies. In 1915 he took command of the First British Ambulance Unit for Italy and it was at the battle of Monte San Gabriele that he was seriously wounded. His many decorations, including the Order of Leopold, the Legion of Honour and the Order of the Crown of Italy, were small recompense to

a mountaineer for the loss of a leg. A farewell to the mountains seemed inevitable:

> What if I live no more those kingly days?
> their night sleeps with me still.
> I dream my feet upon the starry ways;
> my heart rests in the hill.

But his kingly days were not yet finished. In 1918 he married Eleanor Slingsby, daughter of a famous climbing family, who added her own great courage to his, and there began the slow development of a new technique. A peg leg was devised with a spring that would stand the rigours of a mountain day. Another and greater climbing period had begun. He walked up Great Gable to dedicate the Fell and Rock War Memorial. He climbed at Laddow on a Rucksack meet to give his new leg the feel of steep gritstone. *On High Hills* records his earlier climbs made in the full power and pride of his youth. One reads it with feelings of admiration not, perhaps, untouched by envy. But no one can read *Mountains with a Difference* and remain entirely unmoved. Awarded the W. H. Heinemann prize in 1952, it describes his later ascents of the Wellenkuppe, Matterhorn, Monte Rosa, Grépon, Weisshorn, and Zinal Rothorn, and the triumph of the human spirit over a disability that would have laid most of us low. It is an achievement that is so far without parallel in mountaineering history and his honorary membership of the Alpine Club was well earned.

Young held an unusual place in the mountaineering world. His distinguished record, his writings, and his long sustained interest brought him a wide circle of friends from many parts of the world. His period made him a link with many of the historic Alpine figures and particularly with the stout-hearted originators of British mountaineering and the exponents of its later developments. He himself played no small part in this evolution. His Pen y Pas Easter parties, started at the turn of the century and revived after the first world war, were attended at one time or another by most of the men active in exploring the Welsh crags in this pre-hut era. From these pleasant gatherings and their discussions came much of the material for *Mountain Craft*, first published in 1920, in which the newer skills and methods were brilliantly analysed and expounded. The book somehow caught the spirit as well as the techniques of this absorbing subject and had an influence

on the moulding of climbing thought and practice that is still felt.

One of his most pleasant qualities was his friendliness and sympathy with young climbers; we could tell him of our plans and aspirations and find ourselves not in the presence of an aloof authority but with a fellow conspirator. This sense of helpfulness found fuller expression during the last war when, as President of the Alpine Club, he was able to launch the British Mountaineering Council and become its first President.

He loved to play with the music of words; his prose is full of it and so, too, his verse. There is a delicacy and fineness in his poetry, but that is not its only appeal. His poems of mountains have a quality that could only be given by a man who had been at close grips with them in all their moods.

> If but the kindly years may grant us still
> to track the lonely valley to its end,
> and view, though from afar, the crag-bound hill
> lift its long greeting—as old friend meets friend . . .

The wish was granted: he was never far from the hills and the warmth of the friendships he had found amongst them.

A. S. PIGOTT.

Adapted from the notice in the *Rucksack Club Journal*, Vol. XIII, No. 4, 1959, by arrangement with its Editor.

R. W. WAKEFIELD, 1906-1958

The Club has lost one more of its dwindling number of Original Members by the death, on 4th October, 1958, in his ninety-third year, of Roger William Wakefield of Kendal, an elder brother of the late Dr. A. W. Wakefield of Keswick and the late W. B. Wakefield. By the time the Club was formed Roger Wakefield was over forty so that most of his active hill and fell walking was already behind him. At Cark-in-Cartmel where he lived from 1900-1925, with the exception of two years of special war work in Eastbourne, his favourite walk was to the top of Howbarrow from where the whole range of his beloved Lake District hills lay spread before him. He knew the name of every peak in that extended sky-line, and when physical incapacity overtook him during his last few years, his great enjoyment was to be driven to various vantage points around Kendal and Sedbergh, from each of which he could still give every hill in sight its name,

and his eyes would light up with vivid memories of old-time wanderings.

In his young days he did a vast amount of fell walking whenever he got the opportunity. Sometimes it was with his next younger brother, Bir Wakefield, but more often it was alone. From Sedbergh School, as a boy, he used to jog over to his home in Kendal on one afternoon each week of the term, though he would only have time to spend a brief half-hour before he had to return.

Vacations during his first period of residence at Trinity College, Cambridge, followed by week-ends from his work in the family bank in Kendal, allowed him full scope to add to his stock of hill lore. After another spell at Cambridge to get his medical degree, and a few years in London, he was back again. But now, at Cark, the hills were farther away and bicycling, rather than walking, became his main recreation. Sometimes the two were combined, and I remember a bicycling-walking tour we took from Cark about 1918 which involved cycling into most of the Lakeland valleys, climbing most of the hills in the Coniston, Scafell and Gable groups, and incidentally wheeling our bicycles over the Stake pass. Soon after that I took up rock climbing and our paths diverged. His enjoyment was of the open moors and hills. He had little use for the rock gymnast. At one time he was heard to remark, rather disconsolately, that he thought it was a pity that the Fell and Rock Club had now become the Rock and Fell. He maintained that he who only climbed hills with a rope too often missed the full delights of the ever-changing mountain scene.

To him, as to W. T. Palmer, the hills of Lakeland were a never-ending pageant, a pageant full of meaning and happiness. As the hills inspired him, so he inspired others with his enthusiasm for them; and though he never took an active part in the activities of the Club, the Club was a symbol of all that the hills meant to him. Eyesight and memory never lapsed, and so he enjoyed for a long time, as many still will do, the legacy of the hills. As Geoffrey Winthrop Young wrote:

> I have not lost the magic of long days:
> I live them, dream them still.
> Still am I master of the starry ways,
> and freeman of the hill.

R. C. WAKEFIELD.

HENRY HERBERT SYMONDS, 1936-1958

The news of the death on 28th December of the Rev. H. H. Symonds came as no surprise for he had been gravely ill: but that same courage which characterized all his work was shown throughout 1958 when failing strength and much suffering did not prevent him taking the initiative in the many matters which needed his advice and knowledge. Others have written of his brilliance first as a scholar and later as a teacher: in this note we mourn the passing of an illustrious fellow-member.

On his fiftieth birthday he gave up his academic career and retired to the Lake District to devote the rest of his life to the preservation of its beauty. As Treasurer, honorary Secretary and for many years as Chairman, he was the moving spirit of the Friends of the Lake District, while as the head and front of the National Park Movement from its earliest days, his was the driving force in the creation of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act.

He joined the Fell and Rock in 1936. Now, as everyone knows, applicants must qualify for membership: could anyone have offered better than the authorship of such a classic as *Walking in the Lake District*?—for walkers the best of all guides to its enjoyment. Hard on its heels followed *Afforestation in the Lake District*, in which logic and humour and a comprehensive grasp of the whole problem did more than anything else to save the central dale heads from the Forestry Commission.

There are, of course, countless thousands who love the Lake District: there are many who know parts of it very well: but the number is small indeed of those who know all of it as intimately as Symonds did. Moreover, as a rule it is only the specialist who has a real understanding of its local government and history, its farming practice and dialects, its geology, common lands, water supplies, road systems, and so on. Symonds was not only expert in each of these and many other subjects, but had also a prodigious knowledge of Parliamentary procedure, Acts, Regulations, and similar matters; and in support of all this knowledge lay clearness of mind, great energy, perseverance, and an intense and burning love of natural beauty everywhere. There is hardly any prospect in the Lake District which does not owe in some degree its integrity and charm to his loving knowledge and alert guardianship.

Those privileged to have served with him on committees will recall the dominance of his contribution on almost any subject, though none was so serious that it could not be transformed by his practical common sense and his ability to see the humorous side of the situation. Despite the 'feelings' aroused occasionally by the policy of the Friends of the Lake District, at no time was he ever in the least hurt or bitter about the attacks made on him personally. He was generous on many unknown and some known occasions, and of the latter, the unspoilt beauty of the Duddon Valley was greatly safeguarded when in 1950 he presented to the National Trust five farms covering with their grazing rights nearly 6,000 acres.

February 8th, 1959 was a day of unexcelled beauty during which over the whole of the Lake District the sun shone in continuous splendour. At noon on this day his ashes were scattered from the great knott of rocks above Deep Gill on Scafell where 'at your feet the kingdoms of the earth seemed spread in austere and sweeping beauty; rather, by the illusion here of depth and steepness, they rush up to meet you. Deep calls unto deep—the grand stern spaces under Mickledore and the heroic frontage of the Gable plunging to the valley: the harmonies of space sing a great music.'

Let the Club always remember therefore with pride and with gratitude one of its members who, to use his own epitaph, *Multos erudit, provexit, confirmavit* and who, arising at a critical time in its history, was able to do so much to preserve the beauty of the Lake District. *Deo gratias.*

GRAHAM WATSON.

SIR ARTHUR CUTFORTH, C.B.E., F.S.A., 1917-1958

Many of us found it difficult to believe that Arthur Cutforth had not always belonged to the Lake District. He seemed to have made it—and special corners of Buttermere and Sawrey in particular—so much his own.

He first came to the Lake District and walked and climbed from Buttermere about the beginning of this century. Thorough in all he did and felt throughout his life, Arthur became a great fell walker, and within limits, which I suspect he strictly set himself, a good climber and mountaineer. He was a member of the Alpine Club for fifty years. He spent

several seasons in the Alps and was climbing from Zermatt up to 1938—the year that severe illness attacked him and dogged him for the last twenty years of his life. But in these years of enforced quiet—often in bed—his mind and memory roamed the mountains, and his greatest joy was always in recalling in most intimate detail the walks, scrambles and climbs in his much loved English Lakeland. The Alps he respected and loved, but the fells of Westmorland and Cumberland held his heart to the end in a peculiar grip.

He was born in Essex near London in 1881 and spent most of his earlier life in the City. He soon joined the distinguished firm of Deloitte, Plender and Griffiths and became famous at a comparatively early age as one of the greatest accountants this country has known. Later he was made President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants. He was also Chairman of a commission to report on the reorganization of milk marketing schemes in Great Britain, and held many other public appointments including membership of the Royal Commission on the Coal Industry (1925), the Food Council (1932-1938), the Tithe Redemption Commission and a subcommittee of Imperial Defence concerned with the extraction of oil from coal. He was for some time a member of the University of Cambridge Appointments Board and a most generous benefactor to, among other things, his old school, Trent College in Derbyshire, where he was a Governor. This is to give only some of his works and activities.

He was widely read in many subjects and the author of learned works in accountancy besides several privately printed volumes of amusing reminiscences and stories. He was appointed C.B.E. in 1926 and knighted in 1938 and became High Sheriff of Hertfordshire in 1937-38. Both at Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, his home for some years after the first world war, where he founded the excellent Sports Association, and later at Sawrey, he was able by his constant interest and generosity to enrich the lives of many young people. Both he and his gifted and charming wife whom he married in 1920—Alizon Farrer Ecroyd—(incidentally a niece of the late Cecil Slingsby who spent much of her childhood and youth with that family) gave help and inspiration of all sorts to a host of younger friends.

To those who knew him well, Arthur was a gay and lovable companion, bursting with a boyish enthusiasm for hill walking and climbing and good exercise of almost any sort in the open air provided it did not deal with 'killing anything.' He was a good and keen cricketer, a famous lighter of bonfires on all occasions in his Hertfordshire and Sawrey gardens and a specialist on Gilbert and Sullivan and other 'classical' light opera.

Arriving in those earlier days at his house one might suddenly be called upon to enact the part of an entirely imaginary 'celebrity' in order to reduce the pomposity of some more conventional guest. Though his fun and humour were always near the surface, I can never recall any unkindly hits at anyone. And through all his life his great sincerity in work and sport and complete modesty and generosity shone through and made the balance complete.

I think and hope that Arthur will be remembered long by all of us who knew him and enjoyed his friendship, hill companionship, charm and wisdom.

ELEANOR WINTHROP YOUNG.

C. J. ASTLEY COOPER, 1927-1958

Astley Cooper was a novice in the early twenties when Kelly, Frankland and Bower were at their peak. Following in the steps of the masters, he served his apprenticeship to climbing in the good old way.

He had never been far away from hills. When a schoolboy he climbed Great Gable barefoot from his home at Hassness. He began real rock climbing about 1925 and at that time my brother and I met him on Gable. We climbed occasionally together until 1929 when Astley and I joined forces for the best climbing of our lives.

In early 1929 Laurence Pollitt led him up Walker's Gully—his first Very Severe. A few weeks later we did a number of the Scafell Very Severes including Botterill's Slab. From his years of experience of easier routes—and with a naturally keen perception—his appreciation of true severity was immediate, and afterwards he led anything he wished. In the next two years he led practically all the hardest Lake District climbs and some in Wales and Skye. His style was elegant and it was a delight to follow him, especially on new routes.

He had a hidden store of courage and nervous strength behind his thorough knowledge of the craft. Perhaps the best example of these qualities is his lead, unseen, of the Gangway on Sron na Ciche, a climb which now bears his name. In 1930 we climbed in Norway. A night out and the long, weary and dangerous day that followed formed a particularly impressive episode in our affairs.

He was a wonderful companion, gentle and considerate, but amusing in any circumstances. We spent many stormy weeks doing climbs for the *Guides* and typing on damp paper in a wet and windy tent, but he never seemed to suffer from bad temper or boredom. Even when he fell in Mouse Ghyll, through a rucksack strap coming adrift, and spent over two years repairing two broken ankles and a wrist, his patience did not break down. Earlier I had thrown him off the pillion of my motor-bike on Glen Brittle hill; some years later he threw both of us out of his car when it overturned on the same hill. It is true but perhaps trite, that there was never an angry word between us in all the time we had together.

As a committee man his sense of proportion and quiet wisdom were valuable and he made a sound contribution to the Club in the time between the wars. He was an obvious choice for *Guide* writing. His *Gable Guide* lives on as a silent witness to a fine man and a brilliant and happy climber, a man of light and colour who has left a treasure in the hearts of his friends.

E. WOOD-JOHNSON.

I. M. BANNER MENDUS, 1947-1958

Although he climbed regularly throughout the thirties I. M. Banner Mendus was not well known to many people in the Club. I first got to know him when he took rooms with my aunt when he came to Workington from Wales to join Milburn & Co., Solicitors. At this time he was only twenty-one years old, having qualified at an unusually early age. At the time of his death he was senior partner of this firm. On learning of his interest in climbing, my aunt lost no time in introducing us and a friendship was formed which lasted until his death last September. Our favourite climbing ground was Pillar and we spent many week-ends there, cycling out from Workington in the early morning, often climbing until dark and coming off the mountain in the moonlight.

He firmly believed that the correct way to learn to climb was to start on the Moderates and work systematically through the list. His *Pillar Guide*, ticked off with dates, scarcely a climb being done out of its strict classified order, was a model of this doctrine. He was a great theorist in everything he did and his remark, 'I have a theory about how this should be done,' often repeated at the foot of some wet slimy chimney, became a feature of the day. He was quick to see the joke however if, as usually happened, he emerged just as breathless and dirty as the rest of us. He had done many fine climbs, but the one which gave him the greatest pleasure was the descent of C.B. which he made with Mabel Barker and myself in 1936.

He was one of those people to whom success seemed to come easily and only those who knew him will realize the single-mindedness with which he approached every task; in fact it could be truly said of him that he did everything with all his might. This was well illustrated when he told his sailing partner (his wife) on Bassenthwaite Lake that she was not out to enjoy herself but to sail the boat, this because she exchanged pleasantries with a rival crew during a race.

He did not join the Club until after the war, shortly before he gave up active climbing, due, no doubt to heart trouble, about which he never spoke. About this time he took up dinghy sailing at which he had great success, he and his wife winning most of the major trophies and he himself becoming the National President of the G.P. Association. He and his brother Elwyn formed the Bassenthwaite Sailing Club which is now well known throughout the country. He died as he would have wished, racing his dinghy on Bassenthwaite. He will be greatly missed in Workington where he did much voluntary work. At the time of his death he had completed half his term of office as Mayor.

We extend the sympathy of the Club to his wife and family.

JACK CARSWELL.

HENRY BECKET SWIFT GIBBS, 1919-1959

Harry Gibbs was an enthusiastic climbing member when he first joined the Club in 1919 and frequently accompanied the late Douglas Yeomans to Borrowdale and Wasdale Head. He regularly attended the Annual Dinners in the twenties. He was also a very active member of the Derbyshire Pennine Club

and was elected President in 1925. He became Honorary Secretary of the Sheffield Hockey Club and was a member of the Yorkshire Hockey Club Committee. He was also Honorary Secretary of the Sheffield, South Yorkshire and District Society of Architects and Surveyors before holding the office of President of that Society for a period of two years.

J. F. WELLS.

HUBERT KINGSNORTH BEKEN, 1923-1959

Hubert Kingsnorth Beken, who died at Farnborough on 9th February 1959, came of an old Kentish family and was at Tonbridge School from 1899-1903. He was in business in London. He served in the 1914-1918 war and first came to the Lake District in 1923 when he joined the Club and attended the Whitsuntide Meet, staying with Philip Minor's party at Seathwaite. He was not a rock climber, but learned to know the fells intimately and delighted above all in long ridge walks.

He was a quiet friendly member and was the possessor of a fine baritone voice, much appreciated at Club sing-songs. Of late years, family cares and the deepening shadow of ill-health kept him in the south, but he remained in touch with the Club through the *Journals*. The writer of this memoir (his cousin) is glad to recall many happy days spent with him among the Lakeland hills.

IRENE S. WELLS.

It is greatly regretted that it has been found impossible to obtain *In Memoriam* notices of L. G. Lowry and Miss M. D. Weston for inclusion in this number of the *Journal*.

CORRECTIONS

G. F. WOODHOUSE (*Journal* No. 51, 1957, page 89)

H. C. Woodhouse (G. F. Woodhouse's brother) informs us that the Rev. C. J. Woodhouse was not G. F. Woodhouse's father, as stated in the *In Memoriam* notice, but an elder brother. His father was the Rev. Canon C. W. Woodhouse of Manchester.

MRS. W. A. WOODS (*Journal* No. 52, 1958, page 194)

In the *In Memoriam* notice of Mrs. W. A. Woods her mother's maiden name is referred to as Miss Mary Westmorland. We are informed by Lt.-Col. H. Westmorland that this should be corrected to Miss Annie Westmorland. The corresponding notice of Walter B. Brunskill (*Journal* No. 32, 1938, page 143) stated that 'Mrs. Brunskill (née Miss Westmorland) . . . took part in one of the earliest ascents of the Pillar Rock (the third ascent by a lady)' and this misled the author of the note on Mrs. Woods. Actually Mrs. Brunskill did not make the ascent but her sister Mary (Mrs. Mounsey) did (*Journal* No. 33, 1939, page 232) and was the second (not the third) woman to do so.

THE YEAR WITH THE CLUB

R. G. Plint

The Club's year began at the Salving House with a quiet and energetic maintenance meet which was enjoyed by everyone—even the 'foreman.' This meet comes as a tonic after the climax of the Dinner Meet, and we went home feeling that we could now cope with the approach of Christmas and the New Year Meet in Langdale.

As New Year's Eve fell on Tuesday, the official programme was confined to that day and the following one. The weather was poor on the 31st, but nearly everyone went out, and later on all foregathered at the Old Dungeon Ghyll for the evening festivities. The dinner was, as usual, most enjoyable and was followed by an entertainment consisting of a colour-slide quiz which provided intense competition; solos, duets, community singing and a paper on 'birds' of the Lake District filled up the rest of the evening until, at midnight, a flash and a bang outside heralded the entrance of a visitor from 'Sputnik III' which had arrived in a snowstorm! There was bright sunshine on New Year's Day, and the snow-covered fells provided some fine walking and views. After dinner Alf Gregory rounded off the meet by showing the delightful film of his expedition to Disteghil Sar.

Mist and rain were the lot of the Salving House Meet in February, but even so, some people climbed in Combe Gill, whilst others just went out and got wet.

By contrast it was cold and frosty for the Eskdale Meet at the Burnmoor Inn in March. On Saturday we scrambled on Harter Fell, and in the evening Derek Pritchard, an instructor at the Outward Bound Mountain School, gave a most interesting lecture and slide show on his recent expedition to Mount McKinley in Alaska. The members of this expedition overcame many difficulties of finance and transport and showed much grit and determination in bringing it to a successful conclusion. On Sunday Heron Crag was found to be cascaded in ice, so the objective was changed to Scafell. The day was bright with frequent snow showers and marred only by an accident, when on the return journey Kathleen Plint slipped on a patch of snow-covered ice and broke her left wrist.

At Easter, with the exception of Birkness, all the huts were comfortably full. Unfortunately the weather was very bad, with showers of snow and sleet, and many members arriving by road spoke of the gruelling time they had had on the way. This of course is good training! Reports from the meet leaders showed that conditions were no deterrent and a fair amount of climbing and much walking was done. From Brackenclose parties went to Esk Buttress and Tophet Bastion. Combe Gill attracted those staying in Rosthwaite, while those at Birkness climbed on Pillar Rock, Grey Crags, and Castle Rock of Triermain. Climbers from Raw Head were out on Gimmer, Pavey Ark and Dow Crag.

On the 3rd May the call of duty was once more sounded and a strong working party assembled at Raw Head. The murmur of voices in the common room and kitchen of the Barn has always disturbed those trying to sleep overhead, and the main object of the meet was to underdraw the ceilings of the lower rooms and fill the cavities in with fibre glass, in an effort to reduce the amount of noise reaching the dormitories. Many members no doubt suffered on Monday morning with aches and pains brought about by holding sheets of peg-board against the ceilings whilst they were first fitted and then later screwed into place, not to mention the discomfort caused by particles of fibre glass! In the cottage a few skilled electricians carried on with the wiring, and although it was impossible to finish the tasks that week-end, they were finally completed by another party a few months later.

Accommodation at Whit week-end is always difficult to find in Borrowdale. This year's meet was no exception and there was a large overflow at Birkness. On Saturday the rain was particularly heavy, and one venturesome team in Combe Gill were driven to shelter in Doves' Nest. Later the rain turned to mist, so they walked up Glaramara, and rumour has it that they also explored the valley of the Upper Esk! Sunday was a better day, but climbers in Birkness Combe found the rock there very greasy and wet. By Monday the weather had improved considerably; the meet met in Gillercombe and climbed the Buttress en route for the Napes where one member celebrated his 21st birthday by leading the Needle. Tuesday saw two ropes of three (all over fifty) climbing again on the Buttress.

As a Club claiming the whole of the Lake District as its 'stamping ground,' it is only right and proper that some meets should be in the lesser-known areas. Brackenrigg on Ullswater was therefore chosen for the June meet (we should have preferred Howtown but accommodation could not be obtained there) and twenty-three members and guests were present. Those arriving early spent the day on Helvellyn and the Dodds, and a later party ticked off Great and Little Mell Fells. Sunday was gloriously fine. The climbers spent the day on Swarthbeck crags, while the walkers motored to Howtown and ascended the High Street fells by way of Loadpot Hill to Kidsty Pike, returning via the Knott, Rest Dod and Bannerdale. This side of the Lake District is very quiet and beautiful and worth knowing better. There is also much of interest to the rock climber as the *Eastern Crags Guide* shows.

In contrast to last year, the Coniston Meet (4th-5th July) was favoured by two warm, sunny and windless days. It is good to see this meet in the Club's birthplace so well attended ; over thirty sat down to dinner at the Sun on Saturday night and there were even more on Dow the following day. Nearly everyone climbed and the standard was high. Eliminates A, B and C, Great

Central Route, and the Girdle Traverse were all done—to mention just a few.

There was at first some difficulty in making arrangements for the Welsh Meet at Glan Dena in August, but all ended happily and eleven members were present. Despite the rain, everyone climbed on Tryfan, the Gribin Facet and Idwal Slabs. It is a pity that accommodation is difficult to obtain. Wales has so much to offer and meets need not necessarily be confined to August Bank Holiday week-end.

The most important event this year was the 21st Birthday of Brackenclose and the meet is fully recorded elsewhere in this *Journal*. On the Sunday, after it was all over, I had occasion to return to the hut. There was no one about; in the light of the setting sun Brackenclose merged perfectly into its background and there was an air of great peace about the place—surely a wonderful tribute to those whose foresight and skill gave us such a hut.

There were not very many at the Birkness maintenance meet on 27th September but a good deal of work was done, particularly in repairing the wall supporting the drive above the cottage. A large portion was in danger of collapse due to vehicles being forced over to the railings owing to the excessive growth of the bushes on the other side. These have now been cut back and the drive is safe under normal circumstances, but more repair work is still necessary.

In October we again broke into new ground and the meet was held at the Anglers' Inn, Ennerdale. Thirty-three members and guests attended and were accommodated either at the Inn or at Starling Gill (the new hut of the Cleveland Mountaineering Club) beyond the head of the lake. This was perhaps the wettest of all the year's meets, but even so, there was climbing on Pillar and Bowness Knotts and walking on the fells on either side of the valley. It was a grand meet and worth repeating.

Looking back over the year, some things stand out more than others: the laughter at the New Year Meet; a maintenance meet, with all its apparent confusion disappearing like magic as the time for departure draws near; two perfect climbing days on Dow; the week-end celebrations at Brackenclose; and, in late October on a windy day, a member leading Kipling Groove, and his second abseiling from the third pitch because he was too cold to follow.

BRACKENCLOSE, 1937–1958

A. H. Griffin

The Twenty-One Glorious Years of Brackenclose, first of our huts and still the best, were most fittingly, and even elaborately, celebrated in September, and now, as I write, the lengthy speeches, the fellowship, the fun and the turkey are still a pleasant, although dim, six-months-old memory.

One impression, however, remains perfectly clear, and that is how extraordinarily fortunate we were to be congratulating ourselves on another coming of age. For the wonder of Brackenclose is not so much its excellence as a hut, nor its character, nor its situation, but simply that we were able to get the place built at all.

Right from the start—even in those pre-Lake District Planning Board days—we were apparently bedevilled with a score of trials and fighting against all sorts of other interests, springing from both inside and outside the Club, so that the project took nearly five years to complete. But the result, which unified the Club perhaps more than any other venture, has unquestionably been worth all the blood, tears, sweat and frayed tempers, as well as the sacrifices and prayers of so many.

My humble task as recorder of the event—handed over some months after the celebrations—is a little complicated by the fact that at the celebration dinner we were given two rather different accounts of the Birth of Brackenclose—one by H. M. Kelly, one of the principal instigators of the scheme and for some time its honorary treasurer, and the other by W. G. Milligan, the man who actually bought the site and then argued it out afterwards. As I am unable to state which is the Authorized Version I must simply record, in unfortunately abbreviated form, what appeared to be the main points raised, and leave posterity to judge for itself.

But first, a short picture of the wonderful meet itself. It started on the Friday with a successful attempt by a small party in very wet conditions on Piers Ghyll, and it continued on the Saturday with Brackenclose, the Wastwater Hotel, Burnthwaite, Mrs. Naylor's, camping sites and even barns quickly filling to capacity. Climbs and walks were done on Pillar, Yewbarrow and elsewhere, but the second most exciting event of the day—the dinner was number one—was the arrival in the fields at the head of the lake of a large helicopter. It was alleged that its occupants were mountaineers engaged on some record-breaking peak-bagging project but Bentley Beetham, who was reported to have been, characteristically, the only member to converse with them, did not extract a great deal of information. Some of us began to dream up dreadful pictures of the Wasdale of the future, but we forgot these fears by the evening when we had other things to think about.

The dinner itself was attended by 86 people, dining in two rooms, but joining together for the speeches afterwards in the dining-room

J. R. Files

AT BRACKENCLOSE, 14TH SEPTEMBER, 1958

J. N. Moffat, T. S. Tyson, A. B. Hargreaves, W. G. Milligan, W. Clegg
Behind—*H. M. Kelly*

which many of us have known for most of our lives. Almost everybody who had had anything to do with the early days of Brackenclose was there with the President (R. G. Plint) in the chair, the Pharaohs provided a wonderful meal of salmon and turkey, and in front of our plates we had a delightful menu card (designed, it was said, by the honorary secretary). And then, after the loyal toast, with every inch of space taken and people sitting on sideboards and window ledges, the President introduced Kelly and asked him to propose a toast to Brackenclose.

Kelly started off his most detailed and thoughtful speech by going back to 1933 and recalling a visit paid by Milligan before the latter's election as President. At this informal meeting it was decided, said Kelly, that something should be done during Milligan's Presidency to make the Club more virile and effective. Milligan got down to brass tacks right away when presiding over his first committee meeting by asking for ideas as to how the Club's aims could be advanced, and Kelly's own suggestion, having regard to their substantial bank balance, was that a spending committee should be appointed. Pressed to elaborate his point, Kelly reminded the committee that the Fell and Rock was the only major climbing club without a club hut, and later he made the formal proposition that a subcommittee consisting of A. T. Hargreaves, A. B. Hargreaves and W. Clegg should be appointed to investigate the possibilities of founding a club hut. By the following March the subcommittee had decided that Wasdale was the place for the hut, but expressed considerable doubts as to whether a suitable site could be found, and, even if that could be done, whether it could be built upon. The subcommittee had to proceed very cautiously for fear of raising local and general opposition, but by March, 1935, Brackenclose had been selected as a suitable site and the tricky business of acquiring it began. Milligan, Chorley, the late T. R. Burnett and Professor Abercrombie were among those involved in these early negotiations which were chiefly concerned with the approach to the owner of the land, Lord Leconfield.

The principal snag was that the Youth Hostels Association were also interested in the site, and indeed a letter was received before the July committee meeting stating that the Y.H.A. proposed to build a hut adjacent to where Brackenclose now stands. There was even talk—from the Y.H.A.—of a joint hut. These overtures were rejected by the Club and the Y.H.A. told firmly that any site acquired or hut built by them should be at 'a reasonable distance' from any site secured by the Fell and Rock. Meanwhile, the committee decided to approach Lord Leconfield direct, and his agent was sufficiently sympathetic, said Kelly, to prompt the subcommittee to go forward with plans for a hut to accommodate 40 men and 20 women. Club members were circularized and a resolution 'that no

financial assistance be sought from any other club' passed, but the response from members was not very encouraging. Less than 200 replied and of these 45 opposed the scheme, but there were promises of loans and donations, although the formation was suggested of a private limited company 'to protect the assets of the Club in case the hut should not turn out a success.' Kelly thought this a strange proposal in view of the fact that it had been the large amount of idle capital at the disposal of the Club which had first prompted the idea of building a hut.

The sponsors of the scheme, conscious of the opposition, approached the Annual General Meeting in October, 1935, with some trepidation, but they need not have worried. When Kelly formally proposed the building of a hut, the only response was an amendment which sought to substitute the word 'huts' for 'hut' and this was finally carried unanimously. It was decided to purchase only the actual Brackenclose site out of Club funds, the cost of any hut (or huts) to be limited to the moneys subscribed.

But although the Club had decided to go ahead with the hut, the ensuing two years were not to be free from difficulties or disappointments. At the first meeting of the newly formed general committee of the Club in November, 1935, a new hut subcommittee* was formed, the original hut scheme scrapped, a much smaller scheme costing a maximum of £1,500 envisaged, and the Council for the Preservation of Rural England brought into the picture. Later there was a serious development when the Club treasurer, worried about the financial side of the undertaking, wished to be freed from any responsibility regarding it, and there seemed danger of the collapse of the whole scheme.

Kelly accepted the vacant office, but the anxieties continued. Evidence of a stone circle at Brackenclose entailed the re-siting of the hut, a contractor withdrew his tender, and there were difficult negotiations with the architect, but by the end of 1936 the scheme was beginning to make progress and funds were accumulating steadily.

Kelly ended his most interesting talk with a tribute to the late A. T. Hargreaves—'I won't go so far as to say that without A.T. there would not have been a Brackenclose Hut, but I think I am quite qualified to say that he, more than anyone else, was responsible for bringing the scheme to fruition. And I never cross the threshold of the hut without recalling his name and the hard work he put in to establish it.'

Milligan's response to the toast was characteristically forthright and amusing. It was also in considerable contrast to Kelly's contribution, both in content and in presentation. For instance,

* A. T. Hargreaves (convenor), T. R. Burnett, F. Lawson Cook, H. M. Kelly, W. G. Milligan.

Editor.

Milligan revealed that the project of setting up a hut in Wasdale had actually been conceived in a rowing boat on Windermere in June, 1933, by A. B. Hargreaves, A. T. Hargreaves, W. Clegg and himself, hereafter described as 'the four men in a boat.' These four, having later been appointed a hut subcommittee, had gone about their early investigations in the greatest secrecy, but eventually the late Mr. J. S. Stout of Whitehaven had been employed as architect and the delicate approaches to Lord Leconfield begun. There followed, said Milligan, the 'dreadful red herring' of the bid for the site (or part of it) by the Youth Hostels Association, but this was apparently later removed from the path by the speaker himself. Acting on the principle that one must now and again take the bull by the horns, Milligan had nipped in and bought the site from Lord Leconfield, consoling himself for his temerity by deciding that if the Club didn't want to buy, then he would present it to them—as a camping ground. But when this move was reported to the committee, there was, said Milligan, a surprising hullabaloo—talk of members resigning, minutes being queried, and certain societies being tipped off about the 'scandalous desecration' of Wasdale.

Eventually the whole business was referred to a general meeting of the Club to be held some months later, but in the meantime Milligan had persuaded the general committee to strengthen the hands of the original four conspirators by the addition of several prominent members to their number. Disagreement then arose over the architect's original plan—a 'crescent-shaped affair with verandas and whatnot' which Milligan was quite prepared to admit was a bit of a shocker—and it was not until September, 1935, that there was a majority agreement on a second much modified plan. A circular was sent out asking for members' reactions, and, in particular, promises of financial assistance, but this produced, besides many offers of help, several screams of disapproval on a variety of grounds. As a result, the general meeting held on 19th October, 1935, was probably, said Milligan, the most exciting and controversial the Club has ever had, but he was rather proud of the fact that the rules of debate had been strictly enforced and that, quite surprisingly, they had finished in time for dinner. He had hoped to get the Brackenclose scheme approved *in toto*, but, in the event, the opposition had proved a bit too strong for him, and a resolution was passed 'that the members of the Club shall be circularized to ascertain their preference as to whether the Club hut should be erected at Wasdale Head or in one of the other valleys.' It was also decided that there should be no contribution towards the cost of the hut out of Club funds, and that the cost should be limited to the amount given or loaned by members.

So Milligan had to finish his Presidency with the scheme he had been pushing from the very start still dangling in suspense, but months later he had been made very happy by the knowledge that

the result of the referendum to the Club had been a large majority in favour of the Wasdale scheme. And nearly three years after the meeting in the rowing boat, the committee was able to give orders for the building to proceed. This, said Milligan, was the start of the second stage of the saga when Kelly and A. T. Hargreaves gathered helpers around them, and got the building completed and functioning.

Before he sat down, Milligan referred to the encouraging way in which former opponents of the scheme had loyally accepted the Club's decision and worked hard to bring the plan to fruition. He also paid tribute to Kelly's great work for the hut, but said that the Club would never have secured their ideal site but for the efforts of Mr. Stout, his colleague A. B. Hargreaves, and the other 'conspirators.'

This concluded the official speeches, but talking went on until a late hour in the crowded bar and surrounding rooms and passages, and even later in barns, tents and the hut itself. Sunday morning was rather damp and misty with low clouds over the tops, but many climbed and walked on Scafell, Pillar, Yewbarrow and The Screes and were rewarded with a lovely sunny afternoon and ideal conditions for the little ceremony at the hut.

One hundred and ten members and friends met for tea at the hut which had been painted and freshened up by devoted working parties over a long period. There were new stoves and heater, new fences and gateposts, young trees planted around the hut, and a fine iced birthday cake made by the Club's honorary confectioners, Phyllis and Edward Wormell. Ruth Hargreaves who, with A.T. (the first warden), had been a prominent worker in the early days of Brackenclose, cut the cake with an ice axe, and the 'conspirators'—Milligan, A. B. Hargreaves and Clegg—stood on the steps and were photographed, along with Kelly, and the builder and joiner (Messrs. Tyson and Moffat), for whose craftsmanship we will always be grateful.

And that was about the end of the Brackenclose '21st'—a magnificent and worthy occasion which we will long remember. Its success was very largely due to the organization of Ironfield (hut and meets secretary), the devotion of the present warden (Brotherton), the presence of the two meet leaders (E. Wood-Johnson—who, in 1937, spent his holiday preparing the hut for the opening day—and H. M. Kelly) and the enthusiasm of many others. A. T. H. would have been proud of them.

SCOTTISH MEETS, 1958

KINLOCHEWE, 9th to 19th May.

The Fell and Rock were back to their traditional means of transport, and, by the evening of 9th May, some thirty-eight members and friends had reached Kinlochewe by various routes and settled down in hotel, guest house, climbing hut, caravan or tent. Those who drove up by the west coast will remember the torrential rain and high wind at the head of Glencoe on Thursday afternoon, but the sun was out again the next morning, and the views of mountain and sea on the last leg of the journey paid for all.

On Saturday the meet divided into three, the main party climbing Maol Chean-dearg from Annat. Others climbed Tom na Gruagach on Beinn Alligin while the less energetic visited Diabaig. It was a good day with some showers. That evening at dinner, Dick Wilson's health was drunk in Australian wine, sent by himself to the meet from the other side of the world.

There was snow on the summit of Slioch the next morning, and the main body set off round the head of the loch, to climb it or picnic at its foot. Those who ascended by the south-east ridge were astonished to see how inaccurate an Ordnance Survey Map can be. The walk from the summit along the ridge to Sgùrr an Tuill Bhàin was enlivened by a heavy snow storm, which had passed over by the time Loch Maree was reached again. Other members climbed Meall a'Ghiubhais, while Dick Cook with Alf Gregory and Piero Ghiglione, who were camping for a few days nearby, climbed the East Buttress in Coire Mhic Fhearchair.

It was during that evening that we heard of the death of Leslie Somervell after an operation, and the next day Howard and Peg Somervell left for home, accompanied by the sympathy of us all.

On Monday, 12th May, Dick Cook, Alf Gregory, Piero Ghiglione, Guy Plint and Douglas Side, climbed Liathach by the Southern Pinnacles of Spidean a'Choire Leith and then traversed the ridge first to the east and then back to Mullach an Rathain at the western end. The rest of the meet, obeying the sound rule of one day off in three, went by car to visit Inverewe Gardens and picnic at Gruinard Bay. Each car-load made for home by different routes; those who took John Appleyard's advice and discovered the little bay of Mellon Udrigle were well rewarded by a perfect view across white sand and blue sea to the Sutherland Hills.

Tuesday was a perfect May day, and practically everyone went to the foot of Coire Dubh. The party then split; some half-dozen followed John Appleyard into Coire Mhic Fhearchair, while the rest by varying routes and at speeds suitable to their weight and age traversed Liathach from east to west. All the peaks were climbed, the most energetic, led by Dick Cook, even climbing over the Northern Pinnacles to Meall Dearg. Their opinion of it as a climb, under the conditions of the day, was low. One gathered that it was—loose! By evening all had been collected from the mountain and

ferried back to the hotel by car in spite of considerable delays caused by a steam-roller effecting repairs to the Diabaig road.

On Wednesday the meet divided. Some fished in the lochans above Kinlochewe, others motored to Applecross. The Lawson Cooks and Geoffrey Stevens took a party to Loch Coulin and walked up Easan Dorcha, while several car-loads went over to Glen Carron to attack two Munros from Achnashellach. One party climbed Beinn Liath Mhòr, one Sgòrr Ruadh. Dick Cook, Graham Wilson, Joyce and Madge Westall had a splendid walk doing them both. The views of the great cliff of Fuar Tholl when descending from Sgòrr Ruadh were magnificent.

On Thursday, satisfactory arrangements having being made for a boat large enough to take us all over to Letterewe, and, more important, deliver us back in time for dinner, we embarked on the launch *Rose Marie* at 9.30 a.m. At the Bealach Mhèinnidh the party divided. Some, after visiting the Bealach a' Chùirn to view the crags of Beinn Làir, climbed Meall Mhèinnidh, others climbed Beinn Làir itself, while a small party, led by the President, walked under Beinn Làir Crags to Lochan Fada and returned by the Amhainn na Fùirneis. They were rewarded by a fine close up view of the north-west face of Slioch. The real work of the day, however, was done by the Fitters, Joyce Westall, Guy Plint and David Ferguson, who set off across country, climbed A'Mhaighdean and got back to Letterewe in time for the boat back: a great walk at any time, but particularly so when carried out against a tight schedule.

Beinn Eighe could hardly be ignored much longer and on Friday, 16th May, a party led by Dick Cook made for Spidean Coire nan Clach from the foot of Coire Dubh. Once on the ridge, the party set off for the summit, and then, by varying routes, traversed over the tops eastward back to the hotel. The cars were collected from Coire Dubh after dinner.

That was the end of the good weather. Saturday was distinctly wet. Two separate parties: Dick Cook, the Fitters and Westalls; and Raymond Shaw and Graham Wilson, climbed Beinn Alligin; but the rest took a boat from Inveralligin to Shieldaig and walked back along the coast to Annat.

Sunday again was wet; the main group visited Gairloch and Melvaig, walking along the coast to the lighthouse at Rudha Reidh. Dick Cook led a small party of 'die-hards' up Slioch, while George Webb took a car-load over the passes to Applecross. One look at Sgùrr a' Chaorachain in the rain was enough!

And so another Scottish meet drew to a close. Good climbing, good company and Scotland. What more could one want?

GRAHAM ACKERLEY.

GLEN BRITTLE, 30th August to 6th September.

Some fifteen members and guests enjoyed a week of excellent climbing in almost perfect weather. With the exception of the two most respectable members, who 'slummed it' in Glen Brittle House, the meet camped by the shore, where the midges were slightly less active than elsewhere. In addition to much beach lounging, many expeditions were made. Rock climbs included Cioch Direct, Cioch West, Cioch Upper Buttress, Crack of Doom by the direct start and with the direct finish, East Buttress of Sron na Ciche, Mallory's Climb (a mass assault) and the White Slab route in Coir' a' Ghrunnda. A new route on the West Buttress of Sgumain was made by Tony Greenbank, Donald Murray and John Wilkinson—a pleasant 400-foot Difficult which started below the prominent 'white blaze' and slanted diagonally left across the face to join the upper pitches of Superstition. Most sections of the Ridge were visited, and, on the most perfect day of the week, the Main Ridge was traversed in ten hours by Tony Greenbank and John Wilkinson—thirsty work!

Two of the younger members waxed so enthusiastic on their first day on the crags that they were obliged to spend the rest of the week recuperating on the beach. They were joined by a rather delicate-skinned young lady who had been so engrossed with the technicalities of Mallory's climb, that she had been incapable of dealing with the clouds of midges which, for some reason, had elevated themselves from the beach that day. Other members displayed their superb fitness by climbing all day, and dancing all night in the village institute at Carbost. The boats of Ronald Macdonald and Ted Comber proved as popular as ever, and voyages were made to Canna and Rum—only light casualties being inflicted on the party! The late starts made by the meet were surpassed only by those of the boatmen, and this resulted in one of the briskest circuits of the ridges of Allival and Askival ever made.

The food situation was improved by Donald Murray's prowess with the fishing line, and the lack of licensed premises in the glen was overcome by the importation of certain life-giving fluids which seemed to make the magnificent displays of Northern Lights even more brilliant.

It was altogether a wonderful meet, and it is hoped that the 'second Scottish meet' will become a rendezvous for the enthusiasts.

JOHN WILKINSON.

ANNUAL DINNER, 1958

F. H. F. Simpson

'. . . there is no greater misery
than a crowded table.'
Isabella Beeton.

An autumn anticyclone spread a gloom of cloud over grey fells: in Fitz Park bright chestnut leaves, noisy chaffinches; by the lake upturned boats and lonely litter bins. In the Royal Oak reception arrived news of senior members: Harry Braithwaite had just scored ninety years; Jack Wray would be absent after a motoring mishap; P. D. Boothroyd, recovering from illness, had virtually ordered his family off to the meet.

Saturday was a day of mild undertakings, sunless, with occasional thin drizzle. Some of the dedicated climbed rocks. The Annual General Meeting assembled in a recently enlarged and partly plastered and undecorated Albion Hall. The President and his attendants, on a lower dais, lost a little of their former stature. The reports of officers were passed, and R. G. Plint introduced H. P. Spilsbury, the President elect. Having been at school with him when both were seven years old, he could say that Harry had not changed in the slightest degree. There was applause and laughter tinged with a hint of disbelief. Proposer and seconder praised the candidate and the meeting hoisted him into office with enthusiasm. The President recalled that Harry Spilsbury could now claim the triple crown of President of the Wayfarers', Rucksack, and Fell and Rock Clubs. In thanking the meeting, the President elect said the honour would be shared by his wife who would give support, advice and criticism; members would observe the effect upon him of these advantages. Dick Plint, now retiring, was a devoted member and servant of the Club, and he knew what he was like when young.

R. W. Eldridge was elected a Vice-President. The President said he was retiring in the good company of W. G. Stevens the other Vice-President, reviser of handbooks and keeper of the straight and narrow path. A. E. Wormell, Warden of the Salving House and maker of cakes, was elected in his place.

The President announced the expected retirement of Lyna Pickering after ten years as Honorary Secretary, following four years as Hut and Meets Secretary, duties performed with enthusiasm, grace and charm. John Appleyard, who had done the same job and knew what it was like, described how Lyna grappled with it. Lyna thanked us all quietly and simply. Appleyard proposed the election of C. S. Tilly as her successor, saying that the change in the retiring Secretary from diffidence to domination proved what Tilly would be like in a few years. Following his election, Tilly assured the members that he would try to provide the service to which the Club was accustomed.

After dashing off the election of Committee and Auditors, and approval of the year's meets, the meeting engaged in one of the

longest and liveliest debates of recent years. The subject was the President's proposal for a Club Exploration Fund, and over a dozen members spoke. Amendments came thick and fast, and compromise was reached in an agreement that a Fund be formed to assist members taking part in expeditions, details to be worked out by the Committee.

In the Royal Oak again, handshaking, sherry balancing and waving to old friends. No one looked a year older than the last time; nor did the hard-worked carpet in the big lounge. Once we were seated, Mr. Beck's master plan moved smoothly into action; corks popped, cutlery jangled, and an unspecified number of ducklings met their appointed end. After the loyal toast, the President read out over a dozen telegrams from absent friends, including Alf Gregory and Dick Cook, then beneath a tarpaulin in the shadow of Ama Dablam. We drank to the health of all of them.

The ten minutes' interval stretched to fifteen while the overflow diners crept slowly in to swell the total to 320. Hirst and Spilsbury, the Club double-act, sang of the risks of climbing and the benefits of luck and pluck, and, for an encore, contrasted the rigours of mountain weather with the luxury of hot baths.

H. W. Tilman, the chief guest, proposed the toast of the Club with customary dry humour. He wondered if his welcome was based on the old Alpine Club theory that there was nothing funnier than a foreigner. As a mixed club we should know that discord came not from heaven but was brought about by women, and the Spanish proverb that a wife's counsel was bad and he who did not take it was mad. He advised against club expeditions and deprecated local nationalism in mountaineering. After all-male and all-female expeditions he was waiting for one composed entirely of hermaphrodites. In our President we had the combined virtues of banker, fisherman, mountaineer and family man; with the firmness and suavity so necessary in the good father of a mixed club.

The President opened his reply with a review of club activities. He recalled the well-attended meets, festooned crags and continuous bad weather. Above and around Kinlochewe in May, the over sixties had hopped and cursed their way across the Torridon quartzite. John Wilkinson had organized a successful meet in Glen Brittle in September. Harold Drasdo had completed the great task of the *Eastern Crags Guide*. The Club electricians had illuminated Raw Head and the Salving House. Ron Brotherton had contrived a memorable celebration of the twenty-first year of Brackenclose. The huts, though our spiritual home, were not an end in themselves. There was still much to do, and not only on the rock faces. He wanted to see in the *Journal*, 'Fell walks, old and new.' Whether we went to rocks or ridges, we owed much to the unselfishness and constant state of prepardness of the R.A.F.

Mountain Rescue Team and the local organizations. They dealt swiftly with the kind of misfortune which we all thought could never happen to us. The Presidency had given him and his wife two wonderfully happy years and not the least of his memories would be of the loyalty and support of the officers. The Presidential speech was followed by John Hirst's inevitable valedictory ballad addressed to Dick Plint in terms of praise and sugared abuse.

In a fast flowing and stimulating speech Phyllis Wormell proposed the health of the guests and kindred Clubs, greeting the 'distinguished folk from off' with compliment or defamation. Space does not allow a record of all, but these gave us pleasure: A. J. J. Moulam of the Climbers' Club, writer of *Guides* and custodian of Helyg, who had entered the Salving House by night through the women's dormitory window; A. J. Renwick of the Preston Mountaineering Club which dined in Blackpool, centre of conferences and sales conventions, where lady guests were greeted by hotel janitors with 'mountaineer or fancy goods?'

I. Charleson of the Scottish Mountaineering Club replied. He described how he was touched by our hospitality; on his arrival from the land of flood and storm he found on his dressing table a letter of welcome and a note of pleasant things to come; later came a visit from the President and George Pickering, deputizing for his busy and charming wife. The last speaker had flattered him and his Club, and it was as difficult to reply to such a speech as to climb a rock which leaned forwards or kiss a girl who leaned backwards. Having had one good day out, he looked forward to another, and thanked us all on behalf of his fellow guests.

Frank Alcock brought the proceedings to a close with two of his riotous compositions. The President thanked Mr. Beck and his staff for their catering skill and after a rousing 'Auld Lang Syne' we flowed slowly through the narrows into the lounge, to smoke, noise, tea, stronger fluids and ultimately bed.

Sunday was again dull and sunless. Twelve or more who made the top of Gable found it just clear of cloud in brilliant sun, with only the Scafells, Pillar and Bowfell standing clear. The less fortunate trudged in the lower gloom where sketching, leaning upon gates, tea brewing and the firing of volcano kettles were the order of the day. The energetic went to Miners' Crag and other favoured rocks. In the late afternoon H. W. Tilman lectured on his sea voyage and the crossing of the Patagonian ice-cap. The lounge of the Royal Oak was filled to capacity. The listeners were enthralled by excellent colour slides and a story so modestly told that the hazards of this voyage and land expedition were almost lost, for Tilman is an acknowledged master of the understatement.

The sun shone—on Monday, when we had gone home.

THE STORY OF HIS LIFE

Today we've had a hint
We're going to lose Dick Plint.
As President he's had his whack,
So poor old Dick will get the sack.
It's rough, and tough, on Plint.

He's been a right good boss,
The Club will feel his loss.
But things could very well be worse,
For Richard Plint controls the purse!
Of that, he's still the boss.

We've loved the way he's run the show,
Though no one could be meeker.
But one thing that we didn't know—
He's a polished public speaker.

First time: So let us all rejoice,
With heart and soul and voice,
That Richard Plint is with us still,
To rule us with his iron will;
Forsooth, we have no choice.

Second time: So let us all rejoice,
With heart and soul and voice,
That Richard Plint—ex-President—
When he's gone and been and went,
Will still, we know,
Control the show;
Forsooth, we have no choice.

J.H.

Sung by John Hirst at the Annual Dinner on the 25th October, 1958

LONDON SECTION, 1958

As in previous years, walks have been the chief activity of the London Section, but an innovation, welcomed by many, was the decision to have two farther afield, one over the Marlborough Downs and the other in the New Forest. Although these meant rather long days, they were well patronized, despite bad weather on the morning of the New Forest trip.

M. N. Clarke led the first walk of the year for the second year running, choosing a short 12 miles in Kent from Knockholt to Hayes. Despite a wet, cold January day, some snow on the high ground, and a warning that no tea had been provided, there was a really excellent attendance. The general hilliness of the route quite made up for the short distance. E. W. Hamilton led the next on 24th February, choosing Leatherhead as starting point. Fifteen turned out on a sunny day and enjoyed a muddy round over the Fetcham Downs and Ranmore, from which there are such excellent views in clear weather, before dropping down into the Mole Valley for lunch and climbing up on the other side in the afternoon.

Our annual walk with the Rucksack Club took place on 23rd March in the Chilterns and was quite well attended despite rather short notice and infrequent trains. From Ivinghoe Beacon, one of the high points of the Chilterns, gliders could be seen soaring over the Dunstable Downs, a short distance away, while on the return through Aldbury the party saw the delightful village pond and the stocks nearby.

If anybody thinks the London walks rather too slow and short, they should make a point of coming out when David Ferguson is leader. They will find that the countryside round London certainly is not flat, and that for the Reigate area this description is an understatement. They will get what seems like several thousand feet of up and down country track, which David takes in his stride, while some of the older and shorter members of the Club struggle on rather more slowly some way behind. This does not mean that an energetic walk starting from Reigate via Buckland, Headley, and the Buckland Hills on a cold dry day in the middle of March was not thoroughly enjoyable, and twenty-three did this long hilly circular tour. In April fourteen members covered new ground by taking the Ramblers' Excursion to Marlborough, after being warned to take refreshment with them and that they would get home very late. With the return fare of only 12s. 3d. this trip was excellent value. The success of this walk was due to the help given by Mr. and Mrs. Barton and Joyce Lancaster-Jones, who advised on the route and enabled us to make the most of the time available. We saw a most interesting old tithe barn near Marlborough College and crossed the Downs to Avebury with its ancient stone circle. We had time to explore this thoroughly before making for West Kennett, where Mr. and Mrs. Barton kindly entertained us to tea in their charming house. Before leaving we visited the well-known Long Barrow.

Altogether a most interesting day, in country new to most of the party.

The Thames Valley is delightful at all times of the year, and Stella Joy and Joyce Lancaster-Jones led a pleasant walk on 18th May from Cookham to Henley, starting over Winter Hill, from which Marlow's lovely suspension bridge and church are clearly seen. Bisham Abbey, Hurley and Remenham were the highlights reached before the regatta course told everybody that Henley was not far off.

With an invitation from Dr. and Mrs. Dunsheath to tea on 1st June, Dorking was a natural starting place, and once more the Walks Secretary was the leader. With fine weather we had a good-sized party going over Leith Hill to Holmbury St. Mary. Mrs. Dunsheath joined the party for the last two miles through woods carpeted with bluebells. Local Girl Guides assisted in the preparation and serving of tea in the lovely garden, and we owe our thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Dunsheath and their helpers for their hospitality.

On 28th June an all-night walk, organized by the Rucksack Club, in which some of our members joined, was quite successful as the weather was kind.

Holidays were now upon us, so the next walk was on 31st August, led by R. P. Mears from Farncombe over the Surrey hills which he knows so well. The route included the ever delightful village of Hascombe, Holloway Heath and Hydon's Ball, with its magnificent view. The heather in bloom added to the beauty of the landscape.

The weather on 21st September, with torrents of rain in the early morning, was not encouraging. Despite this, however, quite a large party turned up at Waterloo to join the excursion to the New Forest. The weather cleared and we were rewarded by an excellent day. It was, however, very swampy underfoot. Our Walks Secretary led us through forest and over heathland, keeping as far as possible to the high ground, from which we obtained distant views across to the Isle of Wight. It was new country to most of us and we visited Minstead, Stoney Cross, the Rufus Stone and Lyndhurst.

Another energetic walk was led by David Ferguson in October over the Surrey hills. Chalk and sandstone were combined on the hills of Ranmore, Holmbury and Leith. In the following month, believed to be the foggiest in SE. England for a great number of years, M. N. Clarke's party had sunshine and fog alternating on the heights round Chorley Wood and the Chess Valley. It was a good walk, unfortunately missed by some motorists who had to abandon the attempt to get to the starting place, Chorley Wood. Although in 'Metroland,' the Chess Valley even yet retains most of its rural charm. But it was distressing to see that so many trees had been felled, quite altering the aspect of the valley around the Old House at Chenies.

The Annual Dinner was as usual at the Connaught Rooms, but with one difference. Although Dr. Hadfield had been in perfect health four days earlier, he was unfortunately taken ill just beforehand, and could not attend. This was a great disappointment both to him and to the sixty-two who were present, as it is the first time that he has missed the dinner for a great number of years. We were grateful to Graham Wilson who stepped into the breach at very short notice and dealt as expeditiously as Dr. Hadfield with the business side. This usually lasts less than a minute; the committee were re-elected with the exception of George Anderson, who asked to resign, and Jim Beatson was elected in his place. Our guests were Anthony Rawlinson, from the Alpine Club, Alan Blackshaw from the Climbers' Club, Mrs. Lyna Pickering from the Lake District, and Dr. and Mrs. Dunsheath. It was a real pleasure for us all to see Mrs. Pickering, who has done so much for the Club, and whom we in the south see too infrequently. At 9 o'clock Graham Wilson proposed a time-honoured toast of 'Absent Friends.' The toast to the guests and kindred clubs was proposed by Frank Dee in a very humorous speech, and Alan Blackshaw responded. A toast to Graham Wilson and Dr. Hadfield was proposed by R. A. Tyssen-Gee, and we all hope that our Chairman will be with us again next year and for many years to come.

Mabel Burton led the final walk of the year over that wonderful and popular stretch of country around Headley and Box Hill, descending to Leatherhead for tea. The Mole, which had burst its banks in places, provided some unexpected diversions when nightfall was almost on us.

Although we had no official lectures during the year, we received cordial invitations to join those arranged by the Rucksack Club (London Section). In addition, many of our members belong to other clubs, so that visitors to London can come not only on our walks, but, if they so wish, the Secretaries or almost any member of the committee will invite them to attend mountaineering lectures; there is no shortage of these in London.

R. A. Tyssen-Gee.
E. W. Hamilton.

CLIMBS AND EXPEDITIONS

Many Club members climbed in the Alps in the summer of 1958, some with the C.U.M.C. and O.U.M.C. meets, others with private parties. Two members were in Corsica; they are returning there this summer and it is hoped that they will supply a note for the next number of the *Journal*. The most outstanding achievement in which a member of the Fell and Rock (Paul Ross) participated was the sixth ascent of the South-West Pillar of the Petit Dru. Paul Ross was with Don Whillans, Chris Bonington, Hamish MacInnes and two Austrians, Walter Philip and Richard Blach. There is an account of this climb in the *Alpine Journal* for May, 1959, by Hamish MacInnes.

ANTARCTIC

R. T. Wilson, who is at present in Australia, sends news of John Béchervaise who is now Head of the Antarctic Division of the Department of External Affairs. He collaborated with Phillip Law, now director of External Affairs, in the official account of the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions (*ANARE: Australia's Antarctic Outposts*, published by the Oxford University Press) which is reviewed in this number. On Boxing Day, 1958, Dick Wilson saw John Béchervaise off on his third excursion to the Antarctic. He is in charge of Mawson Base and will be away 12 to 15 months.

HIMALAYA

BRITISH-ITALIAN HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION, 1958

Two members of the Club took part in this expedition—Alfred Gregory (leader) and Dick Cook. Two months were spent in the Everest region—October and November, 1958. During October an attempt was made on Ama Dablam by its South-West Ridge. A Base Camp was set up at 16,000 feet and two other camps were placed on the mountain. After extremely difficult climbing the attempt was abandoned at about 20,000 feet due to great technical difficulties caused by steep rock and ice. A journey was then made round the mountain and all ridges and possible routes were examined. No feasible route was found, and with the weather becoming increasingly cold all idea of climbing this very difficult peak was given up.

The expedition then went up the Imja Valley to the south-west of Everest and explored its upper reaches; whilst there they made a reconnaissance of Lhotse 2, the fifth highest mountain top in the world. Although so late in the year and so extremely cold that no attempt could be made on this peak, a feasible route was found, and this should be useful to a future expedition. Near here a fine mountain of 20,300 feet was climbed, and afterwards further exploratory journeys were made.

Part of the work of the expedition was the collection of botanical specimens. This was carried out successfully by Dick Cook who brought home over 100 plants and seed types.

SHERBORNE EXPEDITION TO SPITI

J. P. O'F. Lynam was the only member of the Club on this small expedition, led by J. G. G. Stephenson, which drove out to India and back in an Austin Gipsy. Their object was to fill in the blank on the map left by P. F. Holmes's expedition of 1956, by crossing from Spiti via the Gyundi valley to the Bara Shigri glacier.

They started from Manali in Kulu, and crossed via the Rohtang and Kunzum Passes to Losar in Spiti, which they made their advanced base. From Losar they explored the previously unvisited Dongri-mo glacier and climbed a 21,135-foot peak ('Fluted Peak') at its head. From a pass near the head of the Dongri-mo they found a route into the Gyundi valley above the gorges which had deterred previous visitors. Stephenson, with two porters, then went back over the Kunzum Pass to the foot of the Bara Shigri, and carried supplies up the glacier, while the rest descended into the Gyundi. A week was spent exploring the Gyundi, and one peak of 19,530 feet was climbed. Eventually, with half a day's rations in hand, the party crossed a col into the Bara Shigri and were relieved to find Stephenson on the other side. During the remaining few days some of the side valleys on the north of the Bara Shigri were explored and another peak of about 19,500 feet climbed.

Time did not permit as much climbing in the Bara Shigri as planned, but the survey programme was completed. By combining this survey with previous work it has proved possible to produce an adequate map of this part of Spiti which was completely unmapped until A. E. Gunther visited it in 1953.

The party was in Spiti in August, but had good weather, for the monsoon does not reach so far north in any strength. They used Ladakhi porters, who were very satisfactory.

A CANADIAN WEEK-END

'Well, for heaven's sake. You must be that guy that wrote to me at Calgary. Sure are glad to see you.'

This was the somewhat effusive welcome I received from the 'Transport Liaison Officer' of the Calgary Section of the Canadian Alpine Club! The place: the Valley of the Ten Peaks; the time: last summer. I had been climbing farther north in the Jasper National Park for the previous three weeks. This was suddenly terminated by the local magistrate who took exception to what he referred to as my 'antisocial mountaineering activities.' I had been climbing without a permit, and the fine was about five pounds. Fed up with red tape, I played my last card and arranged to climb with the 'recognized

mountaineers' from Calgary. There were about thirty people on this week-end meet, most of whom were there to 'do' a graduating climb and so achieve their life's ambition of becoming full members of the Canadian Alpine Club. After a lot of discussion I was told that I should be joining a rope that was making an 'attempt' on Mount Temple the next day. The route we were to follow looked as if it would be rather like going up from Llanberis to Snowdon seven or eight times in a day and would be rather more tedious. A bit disappointed, I went to the nearby hotel to drown my sorrows in black coffee and the more pleasing company of frustrated vacational waitresses from Vancouver. I was woken from my reveries in front of the lounge fire by a cold draught of air as the door opened, quickly followed by a startling Lancashire accent.

'It in't all that 'ard.'

'Nor, but thers 'ard bit on't first pitch.'

Enough for me. I went over to their table and told them of the unfortunate plans for Mount Temple. They agreed, with suitable expletives, that Mount Temple was definitely not a good idea. After a few minutes of cragsmanship in which such phrases as XS, straightened out, and over'angin' featured prominently, we convinced each other that we were OK climbers. On the strength of this introduction we arranged to climb Pinnacle Mountain instead of Mount Temple. The only difficulty was that by the time we had come to this arrangement and drunk a lot more coffee it was far too late to go wandering about the woods looking for the Temple party. Since they had expressed a desire to start at 3.30 a.m. I felt that it would be better for my night's sleep if I could find some place where they would be unlikely to find me at their breakfast time. I escaped very effectively by sleeping on the kitchen table of the hotel. With the woods deserted apart from the few marauding black bears and the odd couples who hadn't come up to the Valley of the Ten Peaks to climb anyway, we set off for Pinnacle Mountain. The only real difficulty was getting on to the mountain at all. This was by way of a very steep and frighteningly holdless wall. Once over this we had our third breakfast. The scenery was magnificent and ten black dots disappearing into the misty clouds of the gentle snow slopes of Temple didn't detract from the beauty.

K. I. MELDRUM.

NORWAY

P.B.W., A.E.W. and W.G. were in the Sunnmöre district of Norway in August, 1958. From a base at Öye (Hotell Union—Herr Dahl, very comfortable and not expensive) or Urke (two miles down the fjord—Youth Hostel in the village and a pleasant camp site in the valley just above) a vast number of expeditions are possible. The most interesting in the immediate neighbourhood are Slogen (5,210 feet), Brekketind (5,155 feet), Smörskretind (5,313 feet),

Kvitegga (5,590 feet), Jakta (5,225 feet) and Saksa (3,520 feet), a magnificent viewpoint. The climbs are definitely from sea-level. Patchell's Hut, which is in good condition and well equipped, and is 2,000 feet up, might be used for the first three mentioned, but otherwise one must flog a way through the forest. The tracks are worth finding. Many other good peaks such as the Hornindalsrokken, with the 'finest precipice in Norway,' and the Kolaastinder can be worked from Öye by the morning bus or ferry, while a car is quite useful. Rock climbing of any standard can be found, much of it unexplored, and a small amount of snow and ice, but traverses of the main ridges seem most worth while.

The Norway Travel Association issue some useful pamphlets. Maps are poor but may improve soon. There is a good article by H. P. Spilsbury in the *Wayfarers' Journal*, No. 4, 1935.

A. E. WORMELL

CARPATHIANS

In August, 1958, Mabel Burton spent an enterprising holiday climbing behind the Iron Curtain. After six months of negotiations she had to leave for Switzerland without the Czech visa, which she finally obtained, at the last moment, from the Czech Embassy in Zurich.

The Czech Alpine Club was disbanded at the beginning of the war, but the leader of the Horsky Vodca (a body of men responsible for the maintenance of huts, footpaths, etc. in the Tatra District—the Czech National Park) took the place of a guide. She stayed at the mountain huts, Teryho Chata and Zbojnická Chata, at the eastern-most end of the High Tatras. In spite of bad weather she did some climbs on the black granite there, and made the ascents of Lomnicky stit (2,634 metres, the second highest mountain in the Tatras) and Ládovy stit (2,630 metres, the third highest). In the huts she met only Czechs and Poles who were very friendly. The hut beds were comfortable but the food left a lot to be desired. Food in the shops is expensive and of poor quality so it is not a good proposition to buy one's own. One's passport is always taken away, even in the huts although it is returned for the asking at the end of one's stay. This system, of course, precludes a foreigner from walking freely in the mountains. The hotels in the large towns are comfortable, but there is none of the service to which westerners are accustomed, and here, again, food is very expensive, quality, except for the meat, poor. All board and accommodation has to be paid for in England before application for a visa is made, and the money paid for food is handed back on arrival, to be repaid in the dining-room; the sum proved to be most inadequate.

Neither maps nor information leaflets were available in London, and the only map obtainable on arrival was the Súbor Turistickych Máp 1-75,000 which was of very little use.

EDITOR'S NOTES

The Wasdale Meet at which the coming of age of Brackenclose was celebrated on the 13th-14th September, 1958, has been admirably described by A. H. Griffin in this number of the *Journal.* Harry Griffin's article is not an official history, but a straightforward report of the meet, summaries of the speeches made at the anniversary dinner at the Wastwater Hotel telling the early Brackenclose story as related by H. M. Kelly and W. G. Milligan, and it is interesting to read it alongside T. R. Burnett's account (*Journal* No. 32, 1938) of the opening ceremony which was performed by Lady (then Mrs. R. S. T.) Chorley on the 3rd October, 1937.

Last year, regret was expressed in these notes at the recent dearth of articles on Lake District climbing. This year we have a welcome contribution from John Lagoe on some Eskdale rock climbs. Of outstanding interest is Sir John Hunt's *Caucasus Diary*; and other articles describe climbs ranging in standard from a good Very Difficult (North Face Route of the Central Buttress of Buachaille Etive Mor and Agag's Groove) to Grade VI (Cima Grande di Lavaredo).

In *Climbs and Expeditions* there are short accounts of members' activities in the Himalaya and elsewhere and it is hoped that notes on this year's expeditions will be sent for the *Journal.* Harry Stephenson, who has contributed an article to this number, and R. S. Knight are in the Karakoram with the Batura Mustagh Expedition, while Margaret Darvall is a member of the International Women's Expedition, led by Claude Kogan, which will attempt Cho Oyu this autumn. It is interesting to note that the Club Exploration Fund which was established after considerable debate at the Annual General Meeting of 1958, though still of modest size, receives a steady trickle of donations.

Appropriately, R. G. Plint has written the *Year with the Club* for 1958; while he was President he rarely missed a meet and made a special point of attending maintenance meets. At a time of great strain, during Guy's long spell in hospital following his fall from Eliminate B on Dow Crag, Dick Plint continued to carry out his duties as conscientiously as ever.

We are greatly indebted to our Honorary Member, George D. Abraham (also an Original Member) for the generous gift of a manuscript scrapbook compiled by Claude and G. D. Barton and covering the period 1893-1906. It contains photographs, press cuttings and letters from eminent mountaineering pioneers of the day (including J. W. Robinson, O. G. Jones and the Abraham brothers) as well as records of their own climbing days and is of special historic value.

As a permanent reminder of the work which the Rev. H. H. Symonds did for the preservation of the beauty of the Lake District, a Memorial Fund is being sponsored by the Friends of the Lake

District to safeguard by purchase or otherwise, as opportunity arises, some threatened part of the District, and they will welcome contributions. Our member, Graham Watson, can supply full particulars.

It is good news that a suitable site for the B.M.C. Memorial Hut has been secured in Glen Brittle. The next step will be an appeal for funds to supplement the amount originally subscribed to the War Memorial Fund which, though substantial, is not sufficient to build and equip a hut. The provision of a climbing hut in Glen Brittle would meet a real need and it is hoped that there will be a good response to the appeal. H. P. Spilsbury, our President, is the chairman of the B.M.C. Hut Memorial Fund Management Committee and has worked hard to further the project.

Most members will be aware that, after giving many years' service to the Club (for four years as Hut and Meets Secretary and then for ten years as Honorary Secretary) Lyna Pickering wished to retire from office and that her resignation was reluctantly accepted. Everyone, not least her successor, will however be delighted that she will still take charge of the arrangements for the Annual Dinner. The Club was fortunate that an active climber with a distinguished mountaineering record, Charles Tilly, was able to accept the vacant office of Honorary Secretary. He is at present a member of the committee of the Alpine Club and was formerly a member of the committee of the Scottish Mountaineering Club—a considerable honour for a Sassenach.

It is my privilege once again to thank all who have helped with the *Journal*, particularly W. G. Stevens who has kindly read the final proofs. The contributors have been most co-operative in sending their copy and returning proofs in good time and it was hoped to issue this number before the end of the summer. It is disappointing that it should have been delayed by the dispute in the printing industry.

It is a pleasure to congratulate Harold Drasdo on the *Eastern Crags Guide*; the *Guide* Editor on the completion, with this volume, of the formidable task undertaken twelve years ago of bringing our *Guides* up to date; Dr. Graham MacPhee on becoming President of the British Mountaineering Council; Mr. and Mrs. Lawson Cook on their Golden Wedding; Jack Blackshaw on climbing Slingsby's Chimney (behind Peter Moffat) on his 74th birthday; and the O.U.M.C. on their Jubilee.

August, 1959 MURIEL FILES.

NOTE

After the *Journal* had gone to press it was learnt, with great regret, that disaster had overtaken the Batura Mustagh Expedition. Dick Knight and Harry Stephenson, to whose parents goes the sympathy of the Club, were lost, along with the leader, Keith Warburton, and two German climbers.

CLIMBING ROPES—A BRITISH STANDARD

The British Standards Institution has recently published B.S. 3104 : 1959, *Nylon Mountaineering Ropes*, as the result of the work of a committee representing climbers and the industry. This Standard may be obtained from the British Standards Institution, Sales Branch, 2 Park Street, London, W.1, price 3/-, postage extra.

The Standard specifies four sizes of rope with standard weights and minimum standards of breaking load and extension (and so of energy absorption), flexibility, construction, stability and finish. From a study of the performance of climbing ropes in practice and of the energy absorption of the best ropes available, it is considered necessary to recommend that a rope rather heavier than that hitherto regarded as 'full-weight' be used for rock climbing. To avoid confusion, such descriptions as 'full-weight,' 'three-quarter,' etc. are discontinued and the four standard ropes will be identified by numbers in increasing order of size, as is common practice in industrial rope standards. B.S. 3104 covers the following sizes of rope:

Size No.	Nominal Weight (lb./100 ft.)	Nominal Circumference (inch) approx.	Minimum Breaking Load (lb.)
1	1.25	$\frac{5}{8}$	1,000
2	2.5	$\frac{3}{4}$	2,000
3	4.25	$1\frac{1}{4}$	3,500
4	5.5	$1\frac{3}{8}$	4,200

The inclusion of the smaller sizes does not imply that they are suitable for all purposes, and *it is strongly recommended that only the heaviest, No 4, be used in rock climbing when a single rope is used.*

Ropes which meet this Standard will bear a label showing the manufacturer's name or identification mark, the symbols B.S. 3104, the Rope No., and the nominal weight per 100 feet. The B.S.I. registered certification trade mark (the B.S.I. 'kite mark') should also be looked for as an additional assurance.

WARNING. This British Standard represents the best practice which can be offered at present, *but no more than that*. The loads to which climbing ropes may be subjected in emergency are very great in relation to their size, while experience has shown that there is the chance of severe mechanical damage to the rope when arresting a falling climber. Even with the best ropes some risk of failure must be recognized. This risk is reduced as the size of the rope is increased, and the importance of always using the heaviest rope practicable cannot be over-emphasized.

Summarized from British Mountaineering Council Circular No. 276 (21st April, 1959).